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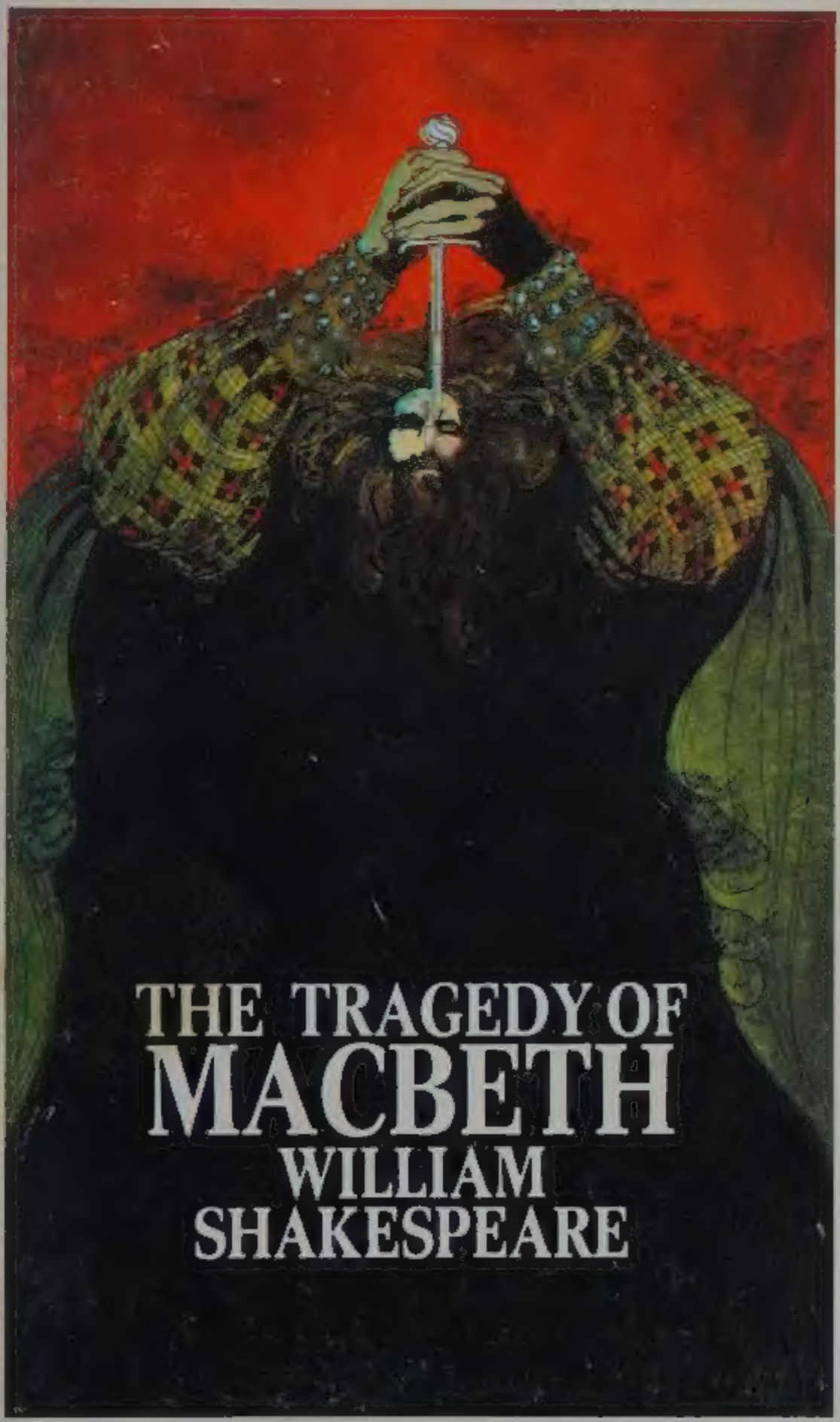

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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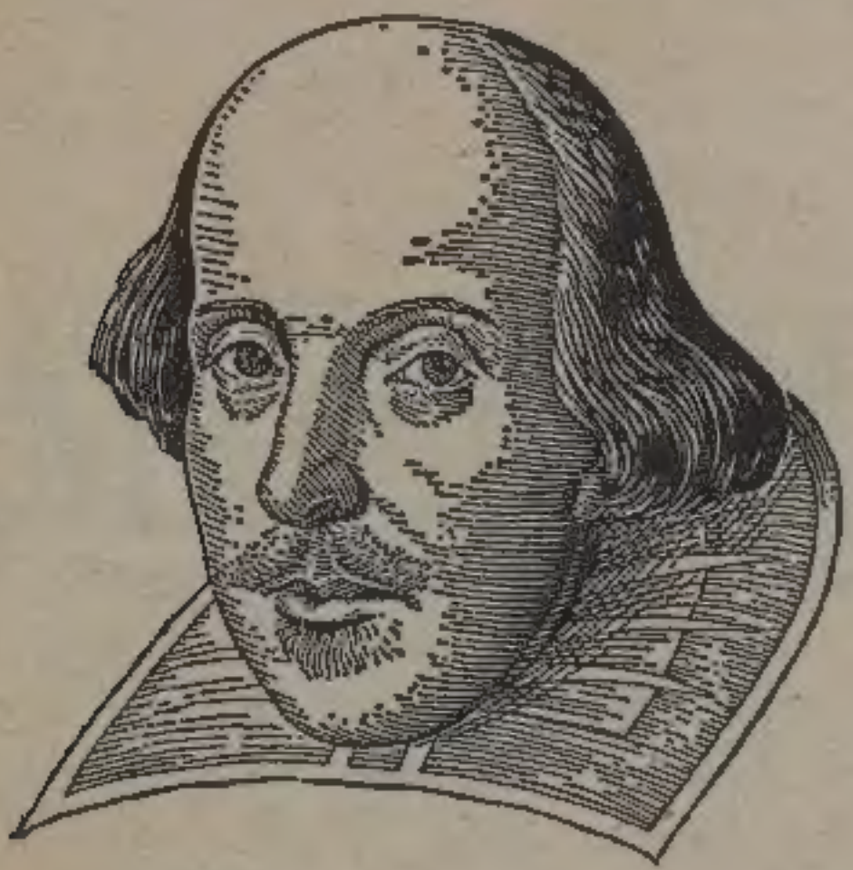

Michael Martin, General Editor

With a commentary on

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

by John Cone, Ph.D., Instructor of English, Scarsdale High School, Scarsdale, N.Y.

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THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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A MAGNUM EASY EYE BOOK

MACBETH

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INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare's Life

A memorable tribute to William Shakespeare was paid him by a contemporary, "rare" Ben Jonson, who wrote several years after the playwright's death: "He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature: he had an excellent fancy, brave notions, and gentle expressions." Jonson also said: "I loved the man, and do honor his memory (on this side idolatry) as much as any." These sentiments are ever appropriate, for, like Jonson, many in the world have long loved and honored Shakespeare, the poet-dramatist for all seasons.

This glory of world literature was born, it is generally believed, on St. George's Day, April 23, 1564, in the hamlet of Stratford-on-Avon, during the sixth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England. Three days later the infant was christened in Holy Trinity Church, an imposing edifice not far away from the Shakespeare house on Henley Street. He was the third child of the marriage of Mary Arden, whose father possessed acreage at Snitterfield and Wilmcote, and John Shakespeare: glover, tradesman and, after 1555, the holder of such municipal offices as burgess, constable, chamberlain, alderman and bailiff, the town's highest post. Two girls preceded William, but both

died in infancy. Three boys and two girls followed, the last child born in 1580.

In due course young Shakespeare, as the son of one of Stratford's leading citizens, may have attended the local King's New School, where pupils were required to memorize the alphabet as well as various religious passages; to master Latin, some Greek, numbers and grammar; and to read, among other works, *Sententiae Pueriles,* the Bible, Cato, Virgil, Cicero, Horace and Ovid. That Shakespeare actually attended this school, however, is moot; in fact, the questions of where and when he received his formal education remain unanswered.

The next definite fact we have concerning Shakespeare is that in November, 1582, when he was eighteen, he was granted a license to marry Anne Hathaway, who was eight years older than he. Six months later, on May 26, 1583, Shakespeare's first daughter was baptized in Holy Trinity Church; and approximately two years later two more children followed: the twins Hamnet and Judith, christened on February 2, 1585. Though the pregnancy at the time of the union suggests a forced marriage, it is likely that Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway had earlier been troth-plighted before witnesses, an Elizabethan legal agreement between a man and his beloved. The church regarded any child of such an agreement legitimate.

Meanwhile, from 1576 on, the elder Shakespeare's prosperity waned, due, it has been theorized, to his defection from the Church of England. However it came about, perhaps this reversal of fortune's wheel was a most significant factor in William Shakespeare's

decision to leave Stratford for a career in London. What his occupations were before then remains pure conjecture, though tradition has it that he was both a teacher and a member of theatrical road companies.

The date of his arrival in London and his early activities there are also unverified, but a rather vituperative pamphlet written by the playwright Robert Greene in 1592 does suggest that by that year he had attracted considerable attention as a dramatist and an actor. Greene, in his *Groatsworth of Wit,* addressed his comments to playwrights whom he admired. He apparently envied Shakespeare. His famous passage makes use of a pun on Shakespeare's name and a parody of a line from the dramatist's *III Henry VI* ("O tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide"). It refers to a certain unnamed person as "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes-factotum,* is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country."

Resenting this asperity, some of Shakespeare's friends protested to the pamphlet's publisher, Henry Chettle, who subsequently made a public apology in the Prefactory epistle of *Kind Heart's Dream:* "I am sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his demeanor no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes. Besides divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art."

In 1593-94 a plague forced the closure of the Lon-

don theaters for a number of months and provided Shakespeare with an enforced sabbatical. This he used, in part, to compose two narrative poems: *Venus and Adonis,* published in 1593, and *The Rape of Lucrece,* published the following year; he dedicated both to the Earl of Southampton. From the tone of the dedication to the second poem it would seem that the two men held each other in high regard: "The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end: whereof this Pamphlet without beginning is but a superfluous Moiety. The warrant I have of your Honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours, being part in all I have, devoted yours. . . ."

More poetical works followed in the form of sonnets, first mentioned in 1598, when Francis Meres referred to them as "sugared sonnets" and said that Shakespeare's "private friends" were reading them. They were published in 1609 by Thomas Thorpe, without the poet's permission. This same Thorpe dedicated the sonnets to a Mr. W.H., said to have inspired them. Who Mr. W.H. was still remains an enigma. What the sonnets memorialize is a friendship between the poet and a handsome young man to whom immortality is promised through the verses: "So long as man can breathe, or eyes can see/ So long lives this, and this gives life to thee." A rival poet and a dark lady also figure in the sonnets. Though the cycle contains many conventional Renaissance themes, its distinction lies in its richness of poetic invention, its universality, its ineluctable beauty.

In 1594 Shakespeare became a member of a new

acting company known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men, a title which the group retained until 1603, when it became the King's Men to honor James I, the company's patron. Shakespeare, as actor, joint owner and dramatist, was associated with this troupe the remainder of his professional life. Its principal playhouses were the Globe Theater and the Blackfriars. Its glory, of course, was Shakespeare, who contributed on the average two plays yearly, dramas which won him praise and prestige. In 1598 Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia,* said that "as Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latins, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage." Meres thereupon listed some of the dramatist's early comedies and tragedies, thereby providing later critics with an invaluable chronology of many of Shakespeare's works up to 1598: "for Comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona,* his *Errors,* his *Love labors lost,* his *Love labors won* [*The Taming of the Shrew?*], his *Midsummers night dream,* & his *Merchant of Venice;* for Tragedy his *Richard the 2, Richard the 3, Henry the 4, King John, Titus Andronicus,* and his *Romeo and Juliet.*" Meres' conclusion is a virtual apotheosis: "the Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine filed phrase if they would speak English." To this Elizabethan and many other contemporaries, Shakespeare's transcendent talent thus far had indeed served his company and art well.

The flowering of Shakespeare's genius reached full bloom in the years that followed, for these witnessed the creation of his great tragedies, problem plays and romances. Professor Edward Dowden, in *Shakespeare:*

His Mind and Art, calls part of this period "Out of the depths." Shakespeare was now writing such masterpieces as *Hamlet, Julius Caesar, Othello, Macbeth, King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*—all dramas in which he truly does explore the depths in order "to inquire into the darkest and saddest parts of human life; to study the great mystery of evil." In the last plays, however, Shakespeare achieves a kind of tranquility after a storm. Professor Dowden maintains that such plays as *Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* are testaments to his emergence "out of the turmoil and trouble of action, out of darkness and tragic mystery, to a pure and serene elevation."

About 1610-11 Shakespeare retired to Stratford, though he did not sever all ties in London, but occasionally returned for business and theatrical purposes. Over the years he had invested in real estate in Stratford, which had remained a bucolic haven for him and his family. In May, 1597, he purchased New Place, a magnificent Stratford residence, for the sum of £60, and after the death of his father in 1601 he acquired the property on Henley Street. In 1602 he bought for £230 over one hundred acres of land in Old Stratford and Welcombe as well as property near New Place; and in 1605 he invested £440 in a number of tithes in Stratford, Welcombe, Bishopton and Old Stratford. He also had business interests in London. Shakespeare thus was a man of affluence. He was also a personage of social distinction. In 1596 he secured a coat-of-arms for his father, an honor granted by the College of Heralds, which became his after his father's death.

Other documentary records concerning Shakespeare at this time of his life are sorrowful ones. His son Hamnet died in August, 1596; his mother, in 1608, seven years after his father's death; and by 1614 all of his brothers and sisters except one had passed away.

In 1607 Shakespeare's first child, Susanna, married Dr. John Hall, a member of a Worcestershire family and an eminent physician. Only one child, a girl born in 1608, resulted from this union. Shakespeare's other daughter, Judith, remained single until she was thirty-two and then in February, 1616, married a Stratford vintner, Thomas Quiney. The Quineys had three sons.

In March, 1616, Shakespeare conferred with his lawyer, Francis Collins, to amend his will, a document of three sheets. Changes had become necessary as the result of Judith's marriage. He generously provided for her and Susanna and left various sums and personal possessions to other relatives, charities and friends. A curious feature of his will is his bequest to his wife Anne: he left her only the "second-best bed with the furniture." Shakespeare apparently felt confident that his daughters would amply provide for their mother at New Place as long as she lived. The bulk of the estate passed to Susanna; and if she died without male issue, her portion was to pass to her daughter Elizabeth "and the heirs males of her body lawfully issuing; and for default of such issue to my daughter Judith and the heirs males of her body lawfully issuing."

Not long after making this final will, Shakespeare died. On April 23, 1616, he was buried in Holy Trinity Church, the same church in which he had been chris-

tened fifty-two years before. On his grave, which is near the chancel rail, was placed this inscription, said to be Shakespeare's own words:

> Good Friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
> To dig the dust enclosed here!
> Blest be the man that spares these stones,
> And curst be he that moves my bones.

What Shakespeare feared was that his bones might ultimately be removed to make way for another grave. His tomb, however, has remained inviolate. At a later time a marble monument with his bust on it was erected over the grave, perhaps the worthiest memorial that could have realistically been chosen but one that hardly measures up to the spirit that survives so vibrantly in his plays.

Shakespeare's greatest memorial is perhaps the First Folio, a collection of his plays which first appeared in 1623, just months before Anne Shakespeare's death. Two of the dramatist's friends in the theater, John Heminges and Henry Condell, were responsible for this publishing venture. They decided that all thirty-six of their colleague's plays should be presented in accurate versions, unlike the unauthorized texts of eighteen already available in single-play quarto form. The dramatist had had no control over these earlier editions; playwrights of the time sold their scripts outright to the theatrical company with which they were associated. The sole play excluded from the Folio was *Pericles*, which is Shakespeare's only in part.

Heminges and Condell, in collecting Shakespeare's dramas, which they called "his orphans," were appar-

ently highly altruistic: "We have but collected them, and done an office to the dead, to procure his orphans guardians; without ambition either of self-profit or fame; only to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive as was our Shakespeare." We, now the "guardians" of Shakespeare's plays, remain forever grateful for this highmindedness and greatheartedness.

Shakespeare's lasting monument thus is his works. Through them he made more lovely the loveliness of art and left an immortal legacy to all mankind. Ben Jonson's is truly the voice of prophecy:

"He was not of an age but for all time."

Shakespeare's Theater

Some understanding of the structure of the playhouses with which Shakespeare was most familiar will shed light on the way Elizabethan audiences saw and reacted to his plays. The Globe Theater, with which he was frequently associated, will be taken as representative. The Globe was circular and its interior was open to the sky; thus, the principal source of illumination for the performances, which usually took place in the afternoon, was daylight.

The stage was a platform extending into a pit. Built in it was a trap door or doors, from which might ascend such underworld characters as ghosts and devils. Also, the stage was covered by a ledge-like roof, called the "heavens." By means of pulley and winch, divinities might descend from huts above the roof to tread the boards in the company of mere mortals.

At the rear of the wooden platform were doors for

THE GLOBE PLAYHOUSE

exits and entrances as well as an opening, called "the inner stage," a curtained area used for certain effects. It served generally as a secluded place—a bedchamber, a grove of trees or the like—which, with its props, could be held from view until the action called for its display. In the printed play, the stage direction "Within" refers to this inner stage.

Above the inner stage was a balcony, or perhaps balconies, which could serve as an upper room. From this area Juliet called to Romeo—but it might also represent a town's or castle's walls or battlements, a hill, or any locale necessitating elevation.

As for the audience, some spectators stood in the pit around the sides of the projecting stage; standees were called "groundlings" and paid a penny admission fee for their places under the open sky. And at the edge of the pit rose roofed galleries holding the twopenny and threepenny patrons, in more select locations.

Average attendance at the London theaters during Shakespeare's active career has been estimated as somewhere between 2,500 and 3,500 a day six days per week. Audiences, particularly the groundlings, were seldom completely quiet; actors (all male, since young boys played women's roles) had to work hard to gain and hold their attention. The actors were often magnificently garbed. They were skilled in fencing, tumbling and dancing as well as acting. Above all, their voices had to be trained to carry to all parts of the house under acoustical conditions not the best. Hamlet, it may be remembered, advises the players: "Speak the speech I pray you as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it as many of our

players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines."

The voice was one of the dramatist Shakespeare's deepest concerns. There were few properties on stage and no scenery. Aside from conveying his poetry, dialogue alone set a given scene's time and place and identified characters; it was a paramount necessity that it be clearly heard.

It is likely that the plays were presented without intermissions. The stage would be briefly cleared between episodes, during which time Shakespeare and other contemporary dramatists provided appropriate action. Another episode then ensued. The kaleidoscopic views riveted the eyes to the stage, which became a cornucopia of endless delights—an immortal platform from which the world first heard, among others, Romeo and Juliet's magical love poetry, Hamlet lamenting the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Othello tormented by jealousy, Macbeth fretting his hour, Prospero bidding farewell to his art.

A Note on MACBETH

It has been conjectured that Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth,* one of the dramatist's shorter works, in the years 1603-1606 and that it was first produced in 1606. A contemporary allusion to the play, which helps us date it, is found in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* possibly acted in 1607. The pertinent passage describes Banquo's ghost appearing to Macbeth while at a banquet:

> *"When thou art at thy Table with thy friends,*
> *Merry in heart, and fild with swelling wine,*

I'll come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,
Invisible to all men but thyself,
And whisper such a sad tale in thine ear
Shall make thee let the Cup fall from thy hand,
And stand as mute and pale as Death itself."

Macbeth initially appeared in print in 1623, when it was published in the First Folio between *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*. This volume, however, is replete with errors, interpolations, cuttings and duplications, from which scholars conclude that the seventeenth-century editor used a prompt copy and exercised insufficient care in readying it for the printer. This volume is nevertheless our sole authority for the text.

Shakespeare's principal source for the tragedy is the 1587 edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. From this history, he derived facts concerning the real Macbeth, who had been, King of Scotland from 1040 to 1057, as well as Duncan, Banquo and others who figure in the play's action. In Holinshed's account, too, may be found many Celtic legends of ambitious and treacherous men who shed blood to achieve their ends, only to be haunted by guilt afterward. What Shakespeare learned from Holinshed, however, he animated and transformed to make a magic of his own.

Shakespeare may also have been inspired by his own King, James I, for *Macbeth* contains themes that interested the monarch intensely as well as some curious allusions to James himself. For example, the King, an authority on witchcraft, had written a book entitled *Demonology*, with which the dramatist undoubtedly

was familiar; and, indeed, powers of darkness permeate Shakespeare's tragedy. James I also took a lively interest in his ancestry, the house of Stuart, of which the historical Banquo was a member. Shakespeare directly refers to his monarch's progenitors in the first scene of the fourth act. There Macbeth views a dumb show of eight Kings, heirs of Banquo who all resemble him, and some of these rulers carry two orbs and three scepters, which were emblems of James I to signify his sovereignty over Scotland and England. Finally, the reference in the third scene of the fourth act to King Edward's "touching" those afflicted with scrofula to cure them seems also to refer to King James, who resumed this practice during his own reign.

As for the play itself, the rich mine of meanings in *Macbeth* can hardly be exhausted in this brief summary. It is surely a moving melodramatic work—one that for four centuries has appealed to the public, performers and critics alike. Very sketchily, it is about a man and woman who use foul means to attain what they want in life: power and glory. Violating the moral orders of true loyalty, they gain a throne but, in doing so, create chaos in the state and destroy what was beautiful and noble in themselves. Yet it the rare critic today who considers Macbeth an "evil" character. Though obsessed, he at first listens to the promptings of his better nature, only to find his ambition too "vaulting" to discipline. When he ruthlessly murders to capture a crown, it is ultimately to earn dross—despair and damnation. And what the play finally reveals about him is truly pitiable: his is "the mind of a great man turned criminal."

Like Macbeth, his wife also chooses murder as a means to her goal, and she too suffers the pangs of the damned. Both are consumed—at the last by physical death, but before then by their own tormented consciences. They are "walking shadows."

Such roles as these have challenged the talents of many great actors and actresses, while *Macbeth* itself has encouraged the varied interpretations of a like number of critics. It has meant different things to different centuries, indeed sometimes to successive generations. Along with those few performances and approaches to the play to be cited here, we will also include some reactions of theater-goers.

It is likely that Richard Burbage, the original Macbeth, was triumphant in the part; the play became a staple in the repertory of the King's Men for several years. The first record of an actual performance, however, comes from a diary of Dr. Simon Forman, an astrologer, who wrote down his impressions after seeing the play at the Globe on Saturday, April 20, 1611. Many references to *Macbeth* appear after the Restoration in 1660. Samuel Pepys, who between November 5, 1664, and January 15, 1669, saw it nine times, thought it "a most excellent play in all respects, *especially in divertisement*, thought it be a deep tragedy."

What Pepys admired, though, was an adaptation of *Macbeth*—actually a travesty—by William D'Avenant, who had made changes in the language, added some scenes and cut out others, including those dealing with the porter and the murder of Macduff's son. The D'Avenant production was semi-operatic; the witches danced, sang and flew about "on machines." It may

have served Shakespeare's intentions poorly, but it remained on the stage for decades.

In the latter half of the seventeenth century Thomas Betterton made, according to at least one scrupulous critic, a superb Macbeth. Richard Steele, in *The Tatler*, praised Betterton for his extraordinary interpretative ability and said that observing him on stage he "had received more strong Impressions of what is great and noble in Humane Nature, than from the Arguments of the most solid Philosophers, or the Descriptions of the most charming Poets."

It is interesting to conjecture what *Macbeth* may have meant to everyday seventeenth-century audiences. Of course, in the first quarter of the century some probably took special interest in the play's several references to their King; what touched James I was at least a source of gossip for his subjects. The play must also have fascinated those—and there were many—who still firmly believed in the supernatural. Dread powers, it was thought, were constantly at work; any mortal might be their victim; one must guard against them. Those convinced that Macbeth and his wife were "possessed" by evil spirits were no doubt awed by Lady Macbeth's invocation to malignant beings:

"Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here;
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty. . . . Come to my woman's breasts
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief . . ."

But the century had its "enlightened," too. The modern critic J. Dover Wilson suggests that to the seventeenth century *Macbeth* was above all a highly edifying "moral treatise," one from which its viewers received fair warning of the inevitable retribution awaiting those who do not follow God's law. Dr. Wilson sees Macbeth as "a soul at first noble, humane, innocent; then tempted through ambition to commit an appalling crime; and last, passing through the inevitable stages of torment and spiritual corruption that precede damnation." To the seventeenth century, such a process must indeed have been instructive.

In 1744 David Garrick, one of the greatest of eighteenth-century English actors, offered to Londoners his version of the play, which retained D'Avenant's singing and dancing witches, but eliminated certain scenes D'Avenant had added. Garrick's *Macbeth* then held sway for many years. While generally faithful to Shakespeare's text, he also attempted an "improvement"—by composing the following rather theatrical death speech for Macbeth:

" *'Tis done! the scene of life will quickly close.*
Ambition's vain delusive dreams are fled,
And now I wake to darkness, guilt, and horror;
I cannot bear it! let me shake it off—
It will not be; my soul is clog'd with blood—
I cannot rise! I dare not ask for mercy—
It is too late, hell drags me down; I sink,
I sink,—my soul is lost for ever! —Oh! —Oh!"

Garrick's performance of the title role enthralled audiences with its realism and spirit. One contempo-

rary remarked that it was "a transition! . . . old things done away . . . a new order." Garrick's spirited portrayal was no doubt aided by his Lady Macbeth; in the productions of 1748-68 this was Mrs. Pritchard, a superior thespian of her day.

By far the most popular Lady Macbeth of that century, however, was the legendary Mrs. Siddons, who first undertook the part in 1775, when only twenty years old. Her comment on her first attempt to learn the role reveals her profound sensitivity to it:

"I went on with tolerable composure, in the silence of the night (a night I can never forget), till I came to the assassination scene, when the horrors of the scene rose to a degree that made it impossible for me to get farther. I snatched up my candle and hurried out of the room in a paroxysm of terror. My dress was of silk, and the rustling of it, as I descended the stairs to go to bed, seemed to my panic-struck fancy like the movement of a spectre pursuing me. . . . I clapt my candlestick down upon the table, without the power of putting the candle out, and threw myself on my bed, without daring to stay even to take off my clothes."

Her stage performances were also astonishing. Of them, the critic William Hazlitt said: "Mrs. Siddon's Lady Macbeth is little less appalling in its effects than the apparition of a preternatural being." Quite often Mrs. Siddons played with her famous brother J.P. Kemble, a celebrated Macbeth, and the combination generally packed the theater from pit to dome.

For much of the eighteenth century, audiences and

critics still viewed *Macbeth* as an essay on morality. Samuel Johnson expressed the general view when he wrote in 1765:

"This play is deservedly celebrated for the propriety of its fictions, and solemnity, grandeur and variety of its actions; but it has no nice discrimination of character; the events are too great to admit the influence of particular dispositions, and the course of the action necessarily determines the conduct of the agents."

"The danger of ambition is well described; and I know not whether it may not be said, in defense of some parts which now seem improbable, that, in Shakespeare's time, it was necessary to warn credulity against vain and delusive predictions."

"The passions are directed to their true end. Lady Macbeth is merely detested; and though the courage of Macbeth preserves some esteem, yet every reader rejoices at his fall."

The eighteenth century, it should be pointed out, also viewed Shakespeare as "the most extraordinary genius that our country [England], or, perhaps, any other has produced," despite its tendency to overlook the subtleties of characterization which we in our day find so engrossing.

Nineteenth-century interpreters of the leading roles include the illustrious Edmund Kean, Charles and Fanny Kemble, C.M. Young, and Macready, who in his later productions reinstated Shakespeare's text. But

perhaps the actor Henry Irving's concept of the Macbeth role is most worthy of mention in this context. Irving, playing in the latter half of the century, saw Macbeth as a liar, traitor and coward, a man who shrank from crimes to which fear and necessity had driven him until abject terror and remorse made death at the hands of the man he had most injured a welcome consummation. Though Irving considered his interpretation of Macbeth his finest work—and though, notably, the novelist-critic Henry James admired certain moments of his performance—there were those, alas, who disagreed.

The nineteenth century also saw a full-fledged operatic treatment of *Macbeth* by the great Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi. Verdi altered Shakespeare's text considerably; one of his more interesting innovations was the substitution of an entire chorus of witches for Shakespeare's three Weird Sisters!

As for nineteenth-century criticism of *Macbeth*, much of it, possibly influenced by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, became psychologically oriented. Indeed, the mental and emotional make-up of all of Shakespeare's characters were analyzed in the light of the century's growing awareness of new developments in that ancient science. Behavior was found more difficult to judge than heretofore. Here is what Coleridge himself wrote on the subject:

"The characters of the *dramatis personae*, like those in real life, are to be inferred by the reader; they are not told to him. And it is well worth remarking that Shakespeare's characters, like those in real life, are very commonly misunderstood by different persons in

different ways. The causes are the same in either case. If you take only what the friends of the characters say, you may be deceived, and still more so if that what his enemies say; nay, even the character himself sees himself through the medium of his character, and not exactly as he is. Take all together. . . ."

To Coleridge, the "interest in the plot is always in fact on account of the characters." About Macbeth, he suggested that the doomed thane suffered from a troubled conscience, of which he was virtually unaware, even before the witches hailed him as "King hereafter" —Macbeth, that is, had *always* contemplated "ambitious thoughts." Coleridge, too, considered Lady Macbeth not a mere fiend, an assessment commonly made, but an essentially womanly creature. Inferences they were, the latter a perhaps sentimental one, but Coleridge's views were fresh and fascinating.

Another critic with a psychological approach to the play was Thomas De Quincey. In his famous essay "On the Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth*," De Quincey offered the brilliant if romantically intense observation that this scene, immediately following Macbeth's murder of Duncan in his castle, "makes known audibly that . . . the human has made its reflux upon the fiendish: the pulses of life are beginning to beat again: and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live, first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them."

Such insights as these, some memorable and some now quite forgotten, were contributed throughout the century. A few short passages from A.C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*, a monumental work of criti-

cism published in 1904, will perhaps convey what was best in the psychological thought of the time.

Bradley wrote that in *Macbeth* "Shakespeare has concentrated attention on the obscurer regions of man's being, on phenomena which make it seem that he is in the power of secret forces lurking below, and independent of his consciousness and will" and that the two principal characters "are never detached in imagination from the atmosphere which surrounds them and adds to their grandeur and terror."

Bradley continued: "For within them is all that we felt without—the darkness of night, lit with the flame of tempest and the hues of blood, and haunted by wild and direful shapes, 'murdering ministers,' spirits of remorse, and maddening visions of peace lost and judgment to come. The way to be untrue to Shakespeare here, as always, is to relax the tension of imagination, to conventionalize, to conceive Macbeth, for example, as a half-hearted cowardly criminal, and Lady Macbeth as a wholehearted fiend."

The present century has seen no lessening of interest in *Macbeth*. Starring in it, and thus adding to their stature as thespians, have been such famous performers as Forbes Robertson, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Beerbohm Tree, Violet Vanbrugh, Sybil Thorndike, John Gielgud, Donald Wolfit, Laurence Olivier and Judith Anderson. A good indication of how "important" the play has remained was the film version by Orson Welles, which, though certainly original, awakened concern and stirred controversy in many quarters.

Modern criticism has tended to place increasing emphasis on textual analysis—in which characters and themes are illuminated through a close inspection of

recurring words, prosody, patterns of imagery and the like. In addition, the manner in which *Macbeth* is to be produced and acted today—in an era which no longer shares the early seventeenth century's belief in witches and demons—has received considerable attention. For scholarship on these and other recent concerns, the reader is advised to consult the works of such prominent twentieth-century Shakespearean critics as Kenneth Muir, Sir Walter Raleigh, W.C. Curry, G.L. Kittredge, G. Wilson Knight, John Dover Wilson and many others. As T.S. Eliot once recommended, Shakespearean criticism should be read, not merely read about. He was speaking for students of critics from Dryden to Coleridge, but his advice is apt regarding modern documents as well.

Macbeth indeed is a drama that has long fascinated the world. It has been considered a morality play, a magnificent poem, a horror tale of "the retiring of the human heart and the entrance of the fiendish heart," even a metaphysical allegory of man versus the universe. Whatever the interpretation, the play surely reveals in the characters of Macbeth and his Lady that at all times life inspires awe by its heights and depths, triumphs and defeats, its infinite capacity for good or evil. In this light *Macbeth* makes plain that life is *not*

> *"a tale*
> *Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,*
> *Signifying nothing."*

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The Story of the Play

Act I

Scene I: On an open moor, amid thunder and lightning, three witches ominously announce a forthcoming meeting with Macbeth. *Scene II:* Elsewhere, a sergeant reports to Duncan, King of Scotland, that his armies have successfully put down a rebellion, largely through the bravery of Macbeth. Ross, a loyal noble, also praises Macbeth. Duncan orders the execution of the rebel leader and grants his title, Thane of Cawdor, to Macbeth. *Scene III:* Unaware of this honor, Macbeth, accompanied by his fellow general Banquo, encounters the three witches on a heath. They hail him as Thane of Cawdor, and predict he will be king, whereas Banquo's descendants will inherit the throne. Ross arrives with news that Macbeth is indeed the new Cawdor, and Macbeth is astounded, rapt in thought of "the imperial theme." *Scene IV:* Macbeth is congratulated by Duncan in the latter's palace. The King, saddened by the betrayal of the thane he had trusted, informs Macbeth and Banquo he will establish his estate on his oldest son, Malcolm, and visit Macbeth at his castle in Inverness. Macbeth leaves to alert his wife. His thoughts are murderous ones. *Scene V:* Lady Macbeth, informed by letter of the witches' prophecies, is determined that Macbeth will murder Duncan. When he arrives, she begins subtly to work on his pride, and the vulnerable Macbeth consents to discuss it further. *Scene VI:* Duncan arrives. Welcoming Duncan and his entourage, Lady Macbeth personifies graciousness, but

there are daggers in her smiles. *Scene VII:* Macbeth has decided not to murder Duncan, but his wife angrily chides him for his irresolution. She proposes a plan. Duncan's two chamberlains who guard his bedroom will be plied with wine until they fall asleep. She will then plant evidence on them; they will appear guilty of the murder.

Act II

Scene I: Macbeth accidentally meets Banquo and his son Fleance, who have been walking about before going to bed. Banquo confides that he has dreamed of the prophecy; Macbeth insists that he does not think of it, but at an opportune time would like to discuss "the business." Banquo agrees to support him if the pending venture is honorable. Alone, Macbeth, overwrought, hears a bell sound, a prearranged signal; he goes to perform the murder. *Scene II:* The chamberlains' daggers are ready for Macbeth's use. Had the sleeping Duncan not looked like her father, Lady Macbeth avows she herself would have killed him. Macbeth murders Duncan and is horrorstricken. Lady Macbeth seizes the daggers from him and goes to smear Duncan's blood on the grooms' faces. A knocking at the main gate startles Macbeth. It continues. Lady Macbeth, returning, urges him to go to bed to avoid suspicion. *Scene III:* A drunken porter opens the main gate and admits Macduff and Lennox. Macbeth, ostensibly aroused by the knocking, engages Lennox in conversation. Macduff goes to awaken Duncan. When he returns and tells what he has seen, Macbeth and Len-

nox rush to Duncan's bedchamber. Macbeth kills the grooms. Lady Macbeth faints; Banquo urges all to meet later to discuss the foul deed. Alone, Malcolm and Donalbain, Duncan's sons, plan to flee from Scotland, fearful that they may also be murdered. Malcolm will go to England; his brother, to Ireland. *Scene IV:* An old man and Ross consider the unusual phenomena of the horrible night. Macduff suggests that the flight of Malcolm and Donalbain casts suspicion on their complicity in the murder. Macbeth has been named the new king. Though Ross will attend the coronation, Macduff does not plan to go.

Act III

Scene I: Banquo is suspicious of Macbeth, who requests his presence at a banquet that evening and asks him what he intends to do meanwhile. Banquo replies that he will ride and that Fleance will join him. Alone, Macbeth speaks darkly of Banquo. Two murderers enter. They agree to kill Banquo and Fleance, a deed Macbeth insists be committed at a distance from the palace. *Scene II:* Lady Macbeth, unhappy, implores Macbeth to forget what has been done, but Macbeth is tormented. He urges her to appear bright and jovial and particularly cordial to Banquo at the banquet, revealing only that the night will witness a dreadful deed. *Scene III:* The two murderers, joined by a third assassin, kill Banquo but not Fleance, who flees from the scene of horror. *Scene IV:* Macbeth, mingling among the guests, receives the murderers' report. He concludes that since Fleance is still young, he cannot

cause trouble. Lady Macbeth calls him to toast the guests. Macbeth comments on the noble Banquo's absence, whereupon Banquo's ghost takes Macbeth's place at the table. Macbeth cries out to the bloody vision, which the others do not see. Lady Macbeth explains her husband's behavior as a fit, an infirmity he has had since his youth. The specter vanishes. Composed once more, Macbeth proposes another toast to the guests as well as to Banquo. His ghost again appears to Macbeth. Lady Macbeth, fearing his loss of control, abruptly dismisses the assemblage. Alone with her, Macbeth says he will find out why Macduff did not appear at the feast; he will also consult the Weird Sisters. *Scene V:* Hecate, an underworld goddess, is angry with the Weird Sisters for not consulting her before prophesying to Macbeth. Also, he has not sufficiently credited the witches for his advancements. Hecate intends to make Macbeth believe himself secure, but security will be mere illusion. *Scene VI:* Lennox and another lord discuss the flight of Fleance. Macbeth's guilt is now obvious. The lord informs Lennox that Macduff has fled to England, where he seeks the aid of the king; Macbeth, knowing of Macduff's actions, is presently preparing for war. Malcolm, meanwhile, has been living at the English court. Were Macbeth to be deposed, he would assume his rightful title.

Act IV

Scene I: Macbeth commands the witches to tell him his future. Agreeing, they tell him to beware Macduff,

that no man of woman born will harm him, and that he will never be defeated until Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane Hill. Macbeth asks whether Banquo's descendants will become kings. The witches raise the apparitions of eight kings, the last bearing a mirror in which Macbeth sees more monarchs. He wonders whether this house will rule "to the crack of doom." After Macbeth hears of Macduff's flight to England, he vows to slaughter all of his family. *Scene II:* Ross offers consolation to Lady Macduff, who fails to understand the reasons for her husband's flight. Her son also tries to assuage her grief. A messenger warns her of impending danger but he is not timely enough; a few moments later assassins kill the boy and his mother. *Scene III:* Macduff urges Malcolm to rally those who would save Scotland. Malcolm is ultimately convinced of Macduff's integrity and reveals that old Siward with ten thousand warriors is ready to fight Macbeth. Ross brings the ghastly tidings of the murder of Macduff's family and servants. Macduff swears to revenge them.

Act V

Scene I: As a gentlewoman and a doctor discuss Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking, she so appears, rubbing her hands as if she were trying to wash them. She speaks, in her trance, of past horrors. The doctor advises that all means of committing suicide be taken from her. *Scene II:* Scottish forces against Macbeth are about to join Malcolm, Macduff, Siward and their soldiers near Birnam Wood. Macbeth, meanwhile, has strongly fortified Dunsinane. He commands nobles who

follow him most reluctantly. *Scene III:* Macbeth is ready for the war, secure in the witches' prophecies that he will never be vanquished until Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane and that only a man not born of woman can harm him. Since his future seems empty, he cares not whether he lives any longer. Lady Macbeth's health worsens, the doctor maintaining that only she can cure the "thick-coming fancies" tormenting her. *Scene IV:* To prevent Macbeth from knowing precisely the number attacking Dunsinane, Malcolm orders each man to bear a bough from Birnam Wood before him, an ingenious camouflage and the fulfillment of one of the prophecies. All march off to battle. *Scene V:* Lady Macbeth has died. Macbeth reflects that life is meaningless; the dreams which Lady Macbeth and he had projected are as ashes. A messenger brings startling news; he has seen Birnam Wood move toward Dunsinane. Macbeth now understands that the prophecy concerning the wood was equivocal, but he steels himself to fight in the open fields. *Scene VI:* Malcolm's army approaches Dunsinane, throws down the camouflaging boughs and is exhorted to fight. *Scene VII:* On an open field Macbeth kills young Siward. Macduff seeks Macbeth, the tyrant who murdered his family. Malcolm and old Siward appear, sure of victory. Dunsinane is theirs. *Scene VIII:* Macbeth continues fighting. Macduff finds him, but he now refuses to fight, telling of his "charmed life." Macduff replies: "Macduff was from his mother's womb/Untimely ripped." Macbeth is doomed. Realizing that, were he to yield, he would become a spectacle for the

public to revile, he duels with Macduff, who kills him. Macduff hails Malcolm as the King of Scotland. The new ruler thanks all for the great triumph.

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DUNCAN, *King of Scotland.*

MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, } *his sons.*

MACBETH, BANQUO, } *generals of the King's army.*

MACDUFF, LENNOX, ROSS, MENTEITH, ANGUS, CAITHNESS, } *noblemen of Scotland.*

FLEANCE, *son to Banquo.*

SIWARD, *earl of Northumberland, general of the English forces.*

YOUNG SIWARD, *his son.*

SEYTON, *an officer attending on Macbeth.*

BOY, *son to Macduff.*

A SERGEANT.

A PORTER.

AN OLD MAN.

AN ENGLISH DOCTOR.

A SCOTCH DOCTOR.

LADY MACBETH.

LADY MACDUFF.

GENTLEWOMAN *attending on Lady Macbeth.*

THE WEIRD SISTERS (THREE WITCHES).

HECATE.

APPARITIONS.

LORDS, GENTLEMEN, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS,
MURDERERS, ATTENDANTS, *and* MESSENGERS.

SCENE—*Scotland; England.*

ACT I

SCENE I. *A desert place*

Thunder and lightning. Enter three WITCHES

FIRST WITCH

When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH

When the hurlyburly's* done,
When the battle's lost and won.

THIRD WITCH

That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH

Where the place?

SECOND WITCH

Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH

There to meet with Macbeth.

FIRST WITCH

I come, Graymalkin!*

hurlyburly: commotion, ado.

Graymalkin: also grimalkin, small gray cat; demon or familiar spirit serving this witch in the form of a cat.

SECOND WITCH
Paddock* calls.
THIRD WITCH
Anon!*
ALL
Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
Hover through the fog and filthy air. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE II. *A camp near Forres*

Alarum within. Enter* KING DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, *with* ATTENDANTS, *meeting a bleeding* SERGEANT

DUNCAN
What bloody man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.
MALCOLM
This is the sergeant*
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought
'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!
Say to the King the knowledge of the broil
As thou didst leave it.
SERGEANT
Doubtful it stood,

Paddock: a toad; demon or familiar spirit serving this witch in the guise of a toad.
anon: at once.
alarum: trumpet call to arms; summons.
sergeant: staff officer ranked as captain.

As two spent swimmers that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald
(Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him) from the Western Isles*
Of kerns* and gallowglasses* is supplied;
And Fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,
Showed like a rebel's whore. But all's too weak:
For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name)
Disdaining fortune, with his brandished steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like Valor's minion* carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him
Till he unseamed him* from the nave* to the chaps*
And fixed his head upon our battlements.

DUNCAN

O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

SERGEANT

As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seemed to come

Western Isles: the Hebrides, islands off northwestern Scotland.
kerns: Irish foot soldiers; sometimes applied to Scottish highlanders.
gallowglasses: regular Irish soldiers; more heavily armed and better trained than kerns; fought on horseback.
minion: darling, pet, plaything.
unseamed him: ripped him open.
nave: navel.
chaps: jaws or cheeks.

Discomfort swells. Mark, King of Scotland, mark!
No sooner justice had, with valor armed,
Compelled these skipping kerns to trust their heels,
But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,*
With furbished arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.

DUNCAN

Dismayed not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

SERGEANT

Yes;
As sparrows, eagles; or the hare, the lion.
If I say sooth,* I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks;*
So they
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,*
I cannot tell—
But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

DUNCAN

So well thy words become thee as thy wounds,
They smack of honor both. Go get him surgeons.

[*Exit* SERGEANT, *attended*]

Who comes here?

surveying vantage: seeing opportunity or chance.
sooth: true, truth.
cracks: cannon balls, explosives.
memorize another Golgotha: make as memorable as Golgotha, literally "the place of the skull" where criminals were tortured; Christ was crucified on the hill of Calvary, also called Golgotha.

Enter ROSS

MALCOLM

The worthy Thane* of Ross.

LENNOX

What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look
That seems to speak things strange.

ROSS

God save the King!

DUNCAN

Whence camest thou, worthy Thane?

ROSS

From Fife, great King,
Where Norweyan banners flout the sky
And fan our people cold.
Norway himself, with terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor
The Thane of Cawdor, began a dismal* conflict,
Till that Bellona's* bridegroom, lapped in proof,*
Confronted him with self comparisons,*
Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish* spirit; and, to conclude,

thane: chief of a Scottish clan; comparable in rank to the son of an English earl.
dismal: ominous; threatening disaster.
Bellona: Roman goddess of war; often represented as the wife or sister of Mars, god of war.
lapped in proof: clad or wrapped in proved or tested armor.
self-comparisons: actions that were equal with or matched his own.
lavish: unrestrained, insolent, undisciplined.

The victory fell on us.

DUNCAN

Great happiness!

ROSS

That now
Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition;*
Nor would we deign him burial of his men
Till he disbursed, at Saint Colme's Inch,*
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

DUNCAN

No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our bosom interest.* Go pronounce his present* death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth.

ROSS

I'll see it done.

DUNCAN

What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III. *A blasted heath*

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES

FIRST WITCH

Where hast thou been, sister?

SECOND WITCH

Killing swine.

composition: terms of peace, agreement, treaty
Saint Colme's Inch: the Island of St. Columba in the Firth of Forth.
interest: right or title to a share in.
present: immediate, instantaneous.

THIRD WITCH
Sister, where thou?
FIRST WITCH
A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And mounched, and mounched, and mounched. 'Give me,' quoth I;
'Aroint* thee, witch!' the rump-fed* ronyon* cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' Tiger:
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.
SECOND WITCH
I'll give thee a wind.
FIRST WITCH
Th' art kind.
THIRD WITCH
And I another.
FIRST WITCH
I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' th' shipman's card.*
I will drain him dry as hay.
Sleep shall neither night nor day

aroint: be off, begone.
rump-fed: either fed on rump of beef, or fat-bottomed.
ronyon: also runnion; scabby, mangy person, good-for-nothing; hag.
card: compass; navigational chart on which 32 points of compass were marked.

Hang upon his pent-house lid;*
He shall live a man forbid.*
Weary sev'nights* nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine.
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
Look what I have done.

SECOND WITCH

Show me, show me.

FIRST WITCH

Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wrecked as homeward he did come. [*Drum within*]

THIRD WITCH

A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

ALL

The Weird* Sisters, hand in hand,
Posters* of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about,
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! the charm's wound up.

Enter MACBETH *and* BANQUO

pent-house lid: eyelid which slopes like the roof over a door or window to protect it from the weather.
forbid: accursed, under a ban.
sev'night: week.
weird: also weyward; having to do with fate, destiny.
posters: swift travelers, those who ride fast "post."

MACBETH

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO

How far is't called to Forres? What are these,
So withered, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' th' earth,.
And yet are on 't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question?* You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy* finger laying
Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

MACBETH

Speak, if you can. What are you?

FIRST WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH

All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH

All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

BANQUO

Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? I' th' name of truth,
Are ye fantastical,* or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace* and great prediction

question: talk with (rather than simply interrogate).
choppy: chapped, cracked.
fantastical: imaginary; created by the imagination or fantasy.
grace: honor.

Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal. To me you speak not.
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favors nor your hate.

FIRST WITCH

Hail!

SECOND WITCH

Hail!

THIRD WITCH

Hail!

FIRST WITCH

Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

SECOND WITCH

Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH

Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

FIRST WITCH

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

MACBETH

Stay, you imperfect* speakers, tell me more;
By Sinel's* death I know I am Thane of Glamis,
But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence, or why

imperfect: incomplete.
Sinel: Macbeth's father.

Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you.
[WITCHES *vanish*]

BANQUO

The earth hath bubbles as the water has,
And these are of them. Whither are they vanished?

MACBETH

Into the air, and what seemed corporal* melted
As breath into the wind. Would they had stayed!

BANQUO

Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root*
That takes the reason prisoner?

MACBETH

Your children shall be kings.

BANQUO

You shall be king.

MACBETH

And Thane of Cawdor too. Went it not so?

BANQUO

To th' selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

Enter ROSS *and* ANGUS

ROSS

The King hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success; and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,

corporal: corporeal, having a body.

insane root: possible reference to the mandrake root, which was in the shape of a man's legs, and when pulled from the ground would make a human sound, a shrieking noise; the eating of the mandrake root was believed to cause insanity.

His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his. Silenced with that,
In viewing o'er the rest o' th' selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks,
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death. As thick as hail
Came post* with post, and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defense,
And poured them down before him.

ANGUS

We are sent
To give thee from our royal master thanks;
Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.

ROSS

And for an earnest of a greater honor,
He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor;
In which addition,* hail, most worthy thane!
For it is thine.

BANQUO

What, can the devil speak true?

MACBETH

The Thane of Cawdor lives. Why do you dress me
In borrowed robes?

ANGUS

Who was the thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgment bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined

post: fast-riding messenger.
addition: title added to a man's name as an honor or means of distinction.

With those of Norway, or did line* the rebel
With hidden help and vantage,* or that with both
He labored in his country's wreck, I know not;
But treasons capital, confessed and proved,
Have overthrown him.

MACBETH

[*Aside*] Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor—
The greatest is behind.* [*To* ROSS *and* ANGUS] Thanks for your pains.
[*Aside to* BANQUO] Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the Thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?

BANQUO

That, trusted home,*
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange.
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's
In deepest consequence.
Cousins, a word, I pray you.

MACBETH

[*Aside*] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme. [*Aloud*] I thank you, gentlemen.

line: support, aid, reinforce, strengthen.
vantage: assistance, aid; favorable opportunity or position.
behind: yet to come.
home: entirely, fully, all the way.

[*Aside*] This supernatural soliciting*
Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated* heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use* of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single* state of man that function*
Is smothered in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

BANQUO

Look, how our partner's rapt.*

MACBETH

[*Aside*] If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,
Without my stir.

BANQUO

New honors come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mold
But with the aid of use.

MACBETH

[*Aside*] Come what come may,

soliciting: inciting, inviting, urging.
seated: firmly embedded, fixed.
use: general or habitual practice or way; normal operation.
single: weak, feeble, unaided.
function: normal operation of mind and body.
rapt: daydreaming, lost in reverie, bemused.

Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

BANQUO

Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

MACBETH

Give me your favor.* My dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are registered where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the King.
[*Aside to* BANQUO] Think upon what hath chanced; and at more time,
The interim having weighed it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

BANQUO

[*Aside to* MACBETH] Very gladly.

MACBETH

[*Aside to* BANQUO] Till then, enough. Come, friends.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE IV. *Forres. The palace*

*Flourish.** *Enter* KING DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, *and* ATTENDANTS

DUNCAN

Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
Those in commission* yet returned?

favor: pardon, indulgence.
flourish: trumpet or fanfare of trumpets sounded to announce the entrance of a character, person or persons of importance.
commission (in). authorized to carry out or perform a special action or mission.

MALCOLM

My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die; who did report
That very frankly he confessed his treasons,
Implored your Highness' pardon, and set forth
A deep repentance. Nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it. He died
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he owed*
As 'twere a careless trifle.

DUNCAN

There's no art
To find the mind's construction* in the face.
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, *and* ANGUS

O worthiest cousin!
The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me. Thou art so far before,
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine! Only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

MACBETH

The service and the loyalty I owe,

owed: owned, possessed.
construction: interpretation (i.e., you can't judge a man's character from his face).

In doing it, pays itself. Your Highness' part
Is to receive our duties; and our duties
Are to your throne and state, children and servants,
Which do but what they should, by doing every thing
Safe* toward your love and honor.

DUNCAN

Welcome hither.
I have begun to plant* thee, and will labor
To make thee full of growing. Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserved, nor must be known
No less to have done so; let me infold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

BANQUO

There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.

DUNCAN

My plenteous joys,
Wanton* in fulness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know,
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
The Prince of Cumberland; which honor must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. From hence to Inverness,
And bind us further to you.

safe: proper, fitting, with regard.
plant: establish, nurture; set up (a person in some position).
wanton: unrestrained, licentious, growing wild.

MACBETH

The rest is labor, which is not used for you.
I'll myself the harbinger,* and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach;
So humbly take my leave.

DUNCAN

My worthy Cawdor!

MACBETH

[*Aside*] The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires!
Let not light see my black and deep desires.
The eye wink at* the hand; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. [*Exit*]

DUNCAN

True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant,
And in his commendations I am fed;
It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome.
It is a peerless kinsman. [*Flourish. Exeunt*]

SCENE V. *Inverness.* MACBETH'S *castle*

Enter LADY MACBETH, *alone, reading a letter*

'They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by the perfect'st report, they have more in them than

harbinger: forerunner; officer of the court, usually sent ahead to make the necessary arrangements for the traveling court party, expedition or group.
wink at: shut one's eyes to; be blind to.

mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives* from the King, who all-hailed me "Thane of Cawdor;" by which title, before, these Weird Sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, which "Hail, king that shalt be!" This have I thought good to deliver* thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.'

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou are promised. Yet do I fear thy nature.
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness* should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst strongly win. Thou'ldst have, great Glamis,
That which cries 'Thus thou must do,' if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valor of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,*

missives: messengers.
deliver: report, communicate, relate.
illness: wickedness, ruthlessness, evil.
round: crown.

Which fate and metaphysical* aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

Enter a MESSENGER

What is your tidings?

MESSENGER

The King comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Thou'rt mad to say it!
Is not thy master with him? who, were 't so,
Would have informed for preparation.

MESSENGER

So please you, it is true. Our Thane is coming.
One of my fellows had the speed of him,
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.

LADY MACBETH

Give him tending,
He brings great news. [*Exit* MESSENGER]
The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal* thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood,
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,*

metaphysical: supernatural.
mortal: deadly, fatal.
remorse: pity.

That no compunctious visitings of nature*
Shake my fell* purpose, nor keep peace between
Th' effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,*
Wherever in your sightless* substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall* thee in the dunnest* smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

Enter MACBETH

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

MACBETH

My dearest love,
Duncan comes here tonight.

LADY MACBETH

And when goes hence?

MACBETH

Tomorrow, as he purposes.

nature: natural feeling; **compunctious visitings of nature:** natural feelings of pity.
fell: fierce, cruel, violent.
minister: attendant spirit, agent.
sightless: invisible, unseen.
pall: cover, shroud.
dunnest: darkest.

LADY MACBETH

O, never

Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my Thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters, To beguile* the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue; look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming
Must be provided for; and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch,*
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

MACBETH

We will speak further.

LADY MACBETH

Only look up clear;*
To alter favor* ever is to fear.
Leave all the rest to me. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE VI. *Before* MACBETH'S *castle*

Hautboys and torches. Enter* KING DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, *and* ATTENDANTS

DUNCAN

This castle hath a pleasant seat.* The air

beguile: delude, fool, deceive, make sly use of.
dispatch: management; with pun on meaning "to put to death."
look up clear: appear untroubled, innocent.
favor: face, appearance, guise, expression.
hautboys: oboes; English equivalent of French *hautbois* and Italian *oboe*, a wooden double-reed instrument of high pitch.
seat: site, situation, position.

Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

BANQUO

This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet,* does approve*
By his loved mansionry* that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here. No jutty,* grieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage,* but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle.
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed
The air is delicate.

Enter LADY MACBETH

DUNCAN

See, see, our honored hostess!
The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid God 'ield* us from your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.

LADY MACBETH

All our service
In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single* business to contend

martlet: martin, swallow-like bird that often built its nest in church spires.
approve: prove, confirm, demonstrate.
mansionry: dwellings, buildings; in this case, nests.
jutty: that part of a wall or building that projects.
coign of vantage: convenient corner.
'ield (yield): reward.
single: weak, feeble.

Against those honors deep and broad wherewith
Your Majesty loads our house. For those of old,
And the late dignities heaped up to them,
We rest your hermits.*

DUNCAN

Where's the Thane of Cawdor?
We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor;* but he rides well,
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Your servants ever
Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt,*
To make their audit at your Highness' pleasure,
Still* to return your own.

DUNCAN

Give me your hand;
Conduct me to mine host. We love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess. [*Exeunt*]

hermit: beadsman, who prayed for the soul of his benefactor.
purveyor: officer who made advance arrangements to secure lodgings and supplies for the royal household.
in compt: in trust, accountable; under obligation to render an account, as did a steward of an estate at audit time.
still: always.

SCENE VII. MACBETH'S *castle*

Hautboys and torches. Enter a SEWER,* *and divers* SERVANTS *who cross the stage carrying dishes and service. Then enter* MACBETH

MACBETH

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly. If th' assassination
Could trammel* up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease,* success;* that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump* the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here, that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught return
To plague the inventor. This even-handed justice
Commends* th' ingredience of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties* so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues

sewer: steward.
trammel: enmesh, entangle, confine in a net.
surcease: completion, cessation (as in death).
success: result or consequences of action; outcome.
jump: chance, risk, hazard.
commend: offer.
faculties: powers, prerogatives.

Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim horsed
Upon the sightless* couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on th' other.

Enter LADY MACBETH

How now! what news?

LADY MACBETH

He has almost supped. Why have you left the chamber?

MACBETH

Hath he asked for me?

LADY MACBETH

Know you not he has?

MACBETH

We will proceed no further in this business.
He hath honored me of late, and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

LADY MACBETH

Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since?

sightless: invisible, unseen; **sightless couriers:** invisible messengers (here, the winds).

And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valor
As thou are in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
Like the poor cat i' th' adage?*

MACBETH

Prithee, peace!
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH

What beast was 't then
That made you break* this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere,* and yet you would make both.
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

cat i' th' adage: refers to proverb, "The cat would eat fish but would not wet her feet."
break: disclose, impart, reveal, broach.
adhere: suit, agree; lend themselves to the occasion.

MACBETH

If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH

We fail?

But screw your courage to the sticking place,*
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep
(Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him) his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail* so convince,*
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt* of reason
A limbec* only. When in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
Th' unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?*

MACBETH

Bring forth men-children only;
For thy undaunted mettle* should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have marked with blood those sleepy two

sticking place: notch (where the string of the crossbow was held taut for shooting).
wassail: revelry, drinking, carousing.
convince: overcome, overpower, defeat completely.
receipt: receptacle, container.
limbeck: the cap (alembic) of a still which catches the fumes as they rise during distillation.
quell: killing, murder.
mettle: the quality, substance or "stuff" of a person, his ardor or spirit; disposition, temperament.

Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,
That they have done 't?

LADY MACBETH

Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamor roar
Upon his death?

MACBETH

I am settled,* and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show;
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

[*Exeunt*]

settled: resolved, determined, adamant.

ACT II

SCENE I. *Inverness. Court of* MACBETH'S *castle*

Enter BANQUO, *and* FLEANCE *bearing a torch before him*

BANQUO

How goes the night, boy?

FLEANCE

The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.

BANQUO

And she goes down at twelve.

FLEANCE

I take 't, 'tis later, sir.

BANQUO

Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry* in heaven,
Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.
A heavy summons* lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose!

Enter MACBETH, *and a* SERVANT *with a torch*

Give me my sword.
Who's there?

husbandry: economy, thrift.
summons: call or signal to surrender (to sleep).

MACBETH

A friend.

BANQUO

What, sir, not yet at rest? The King's a-bed.
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great largess to your offices.*
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up
In measureless content.

MACBETH

Being unprepared,
Our will became the servant to defect,
Which else should free have wrought.

BANQUO

All's well.
I dreamt last night of the three Weird Sisters.
To you they have showed some truth.

MACBETH

I think not of them.
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.

BANQUO

At your kind'st leisure.

MACBETH

If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,*
It shall make honor for you,

BANQUO

So I lose none

offices: servants' quarters.
when 'tis: at the proper moment.

In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised* and allegiance clear,
I shall be counseled.

MACBETH

Good repose the while!

BANQUO

Thanks, sir. The like to you!

[*Exeunt* BANQUO *and* FLEANCE]

MACBETH

Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

[*Exit* SERVANT]

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee!
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible*
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed* brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going,
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the' other senses,
Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still;

franchised: free (from guilt).
sensible: sensitive to, perceptive.
heat-oppressed: fevered.

And on thy blade and dudgeon* gouts* of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing.
It is the bloody business which informs*
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse*
The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's* offerings; and withered murder,
Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's* ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives;
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.
[*A bell rings*]
I go, and it is done. The bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven, or to hell. [*Exit*]

dudgeon: hilt or handle, orginally, kind of wood used for handle of knives and daggers.
gout: (large) drop, clot, blob.
informs: creates impressions, shapes or forms.
abuse: mislead, deceive.
Hecate: Greek goddess of witchcraft, power of the underworld and goddess of the crossroads; unusual triple goddess of moon, earth and evil, black magic.
Tarquin: Tarquinius Superbus, in Roman legend the seventh and last king of Rome (534-510 B.C.); although a tyrant, he was a great leader.

SCENE II. *The same*

Enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quenched them hath given me fire. Hark!
Peace!
It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman,*
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it.
The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms*
Do mock their charge with snores. I have drugged their
possets,*
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

MACBETH

[*Within*] Who's there? what, ho!

LADY MACBETH

Alack, I am afraid they have awaked
And 'tis not done! Th' attempt and not the deed
Confounds* us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done 't.

Enter MACBETH

My husband!

bellman: town crier; also rang bell to toll condemned prisoner the night before his execution; watchman.
groom: servant who slept at the foot of the king's bed.
posset: hot, spiced night cap; mixture of milk and ale.
confound: ruin, destroy, waste.

MACBETH

I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

LADY MACBETH

I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

MACBETH

When?

LADY MACBETH

Now.

MACBETH

As I descended?

LADY MACBETH

Ay.

MACBETH

Hark!
Who lies i' th' second chamber?

LADY MACBETH

Donalbain.

MACBETH

This is a sorry sight. [*Looking at his hands*]

LADY MACBETH

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

MACBETH

There's one did laugh in 's sleep, and one cried 'Murder!'
That they did wake each other. I stood and heard them.
But they did say their prayers, and addressed them
Again to sleep.

LADY MACBETH

There are two lodged together.

MACBETH

One cried 'God bless us!' and 'Amen' the other,

As they had seen me with these hangman's hands,
List'ning their fear. I could not say 'Amen,'
When they did say 'God bless us!'

LADY MACBETH

Consider it not so deeply.

MACBETH

But wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen'?
I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen'
Stuck in my throat.

LADY MACBETH

These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

MACBETH

Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep'—the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the raveled sleave* of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast,—

LADY MACBETH

What do you mean?

MACBETH

Still it cried 'Sleep no more!' to all the house;
'Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more!'

LADY MACBETH

Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy Thane,
You do unbend* your noble strength, to think

raveled sleave: tangled skein; **knits up the raveled sleave:** smoothes out the tangled skein.
unbend: relax, slacken.

So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there. Go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH

I'll go no more.
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on 't again I dare not.

LADY MACBETH

Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures. 'Tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild* the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt. [*Exit. Knocking within*]

MACBETH

Whence is that knocking?
How is 't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,*
Making the green one red.

Re-enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH

My hands are of your color, but I shame

gild: to smear, paint, color or cover with yellowish or red iridescent scum.
incarnadine: literally, color or stain bloodred.

To wear a heart so white. [*Knocking within*] I hear a knocking
At the south entry. Retire we to our chamber.
A little water clears us of this deed.
How easy is it then! Your constancy*
Hath left you unattended. [*Knocking within*] Hark! more knocking.
Get on your nightgown,* lest occasion call us
And show us to be watchers.* Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

MACBETH

To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself. [*Knocking within*]
Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst! [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III. *The same*

Enter a PORTER. *Knocking within*

PORTER

Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old* turning the key. [*Knocking*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' th' name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer,* that hanged himself on

constancy: courage, firmness of purpose.
nightgown: dressing-gown, bathrobe.
watcher: one who is awake.
old: much; slang for "plenty of."
farmer: those who hoarded their crops were often the butt of jokes.

th' expectation of plenty. Come in time; have napkins* enow about you; here you'll sweat for 't. [*Knocking*] Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator,* that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven. O, come in, equivocator. [*Knocking*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose.* Come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose.* [*Knocking*] Knock, knock, never at quiet! What are you? But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further. I had thought to have let in some of all professions that go the primrose way to th' everlasting bonfire. [*Knocking*] Anon, anon! I pray you, remember the porter. [*Opens the gate*]

Enter MACDUFF *and* LENNOX

MACDUFF

Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,
That you do lie so late?

PORTER

Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock;*

napkin: handkerchief.
equivocator: reference to contemporary dispute within the Catholic Church and more specifically to the Jesuits tried for political conspiracy.
French hose: tight-fitting breeches.
goose: tailor's pressing iron with handle that looks like a goose's neck; swelling caused by venereal disease.
second cock: 3 A.M.

and drink, sir, is a great provoker of three things.

MACDUFF

What three things does drink especially provoke?

PORTER

Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep and urine. Lechery, sir, it provokes and unprovokes; it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance. Therefore much drink may be said to be an equivocator with lechery: it makes him and it mars him; it sets him on, and it takes him off; it persuades him, and disheartens him; makes him stand to, and not stand to; in conclusion, equivocates him in a sleep, and giving him the lie, leaves him.

MACDUFF

I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

PORTER

That it did, sir, i' the very throat on me; but I requited him for his lie, and, I think, being too strong for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift* to cast him.

MACDUFF

Is thy master stirring?

Enter MACBETH

Our knocking has awakened him; here he comes.

LENNOX

Good morrow, noble sir.

MACBETH

Good morrow, both.

made a shift: managed in one way or another.

MACDUFF
Is the King stirring, worthy Thane?
MACBETH
Not yet.
MACDUFF
He did command me to call timely on him;
I have almost slipped the hour.
MACBETH
I'll bring you to him.
MACDUFF
I know this is a joyful trouble to you;
But yet 'tis one.
MACBETH
The labor we delight in physics* pain.
This is the door.
MACDUFF
I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my limited* service. [*Exit*]
LENNOX
Goes the King hence today?
MACBETH
He does; he did appoint so.
LENNOX
The night has been unruly. Where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' th' air, strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion* and confused events

physics: remedies, alleviates, cures.
limited: appointed.
combustion: civil tumult, uproar.

New hatched to th' woeful time. The obscure bird*
Clamored the livelong night. Some say, the earth
Was feverous and did shake.

MACBETH

'Twas a rough night.

LENNOX

My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

Re-enter MACDUFF

MACDUFF

O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee!

MACBETH *and* LENNOX

What's the matter?

MACDUFF

Confusion* now hath made his masterpiece!
Most sacilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' th' building.

MACBETH

What is 't you say? the life?

LENNOX

Mean you his Majesty?

MACDUFF

Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon.* Do not bid me speak;

obscure bird: refers to the owl.
confusion: destruction, ruin.
Gorgon: Greek mythological monster with snakes for hair, so horrible that the sight of her turned people to stone.

See, and then speak yourselves.

[*Exeunt* MACBETH *and* LENNOX]

Awake; awake!

Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason!
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself! up, up, and see
The great doom's image!* Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,*
To countenance* this horror. Ring the bell! [*Bell rings*]

Enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH

What's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? Speak, speak!

MACDUFF

O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak.
The repetition,* in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.

Enter BANQUO

O Banquo, Banquo!
Our royal master's murdered.

LADY MACBETH

Woe, alas!

doom's image: a sight as terrible as Doomsday.
sprite: spirit.
countenance: be in keeping with.
repetition: report, recital, account.

What, in our house?

BANQUO

Too cruel anywhere.
Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself.
And say it is not so.

Re-enter MACBETH *and* LENNOX, *with* ROSS

MACBETH

Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had lived a blessed time; for from this instant
There's nothing serious in mortality.
All is but toys;* renown and grace is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees*
Is left this vault* to brag of.

Enter MALCOLM *and* DONALBAIN

DONALBAIN

What is amiss?

MACBETH

You are, and do not know 't.
The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopped; the very source of it is stopped.

MACDUFF

Your royal father's murdered.

MALCOLM

O, by whom?

LENNOX

Those of his chamber, as it seemed, had done 't.

toys: trifles, unimportant items.
lees: dregs.
vault: wine cellar, cavern; the earth or universe.

Their hands and faces were all badged* with blood;
So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
Upon their pillows.
They stared, and were distracted; no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.

MACBETH

O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.

MACDUFF

Wherefore did you so?

MACBETH

Who can be wise, amazed,* temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man.
The expedition* of my violent love
Outrun the pauser reason. Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood,
And his gashed stabs looked like a breach in nature
For ruin's wasteful entrance; there, the murderers,
Steeped in the colors of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breeched with gore. Who could refrain
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make 's love known?

LADY MACBETH

Help me hence, ho!

MACDUFF

Look to the lady.

badged: marked; the servant wore a badge to indicate the household to which he belonged.
amazed: confused (not astonished).
expedition: haste or hasty action.

MALCOLM

[*Aside to* DONALBAIN] Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument* for ours?

DONALBAIN

[*Aside to* MALCOLM] What should be spoken here,
where our fate,
Hid in an auger-hole,* may rush, and seize us?
Let's away.
Our tears are yet brewed.

MALCOLM

[*Aside to* DONALBAIN] Nor our strong sorrow
Upon the foot of motion.

BANQUO

Look to the lady.

[LADY MACBETH *is led out*]

And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
And question* this most bloody piece of work,
To know it further. Fears and scruples* shake us.
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the undivulged pretense* I fight
Of treasonous malice.

MACDUFF

And so do I.

argument: topic or subject of conversation.
auger-hole: small hole made by an augur, a carpenter's tool (i.e., harm may come to us from the least obvious source).
question: discuss.
scruples: doubts.
pretense: aim, intention, design, stratagem.

ALL

So all.

MACBETH

Let's briefly put on manly readiness,
And meet i' th' hall together.

ALL

Well contented.

[*Exeunt all but* MALCOLM *and* DONALBAIN]

MALCOLM

What will you do? Let's not consort with them.
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office
Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.

DONALBAIN

To Ireland, I. Our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer. Where we are
There's daggers in men's smiles; the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.

MALCOLM

This murderous shaft that's shot
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore to horse,
And let us not be dainty* of leave-taking,
But shift away. There's warrant* in that theft
Which steals itself when there's no mercy left. [*Exeunt*]

dainty: particular.
warrant: justification.

SCENE IV. *Outside* MACBETH'S *castle*

Enter ROSS *with an* OLD MAN

OLD MAN

Threescore and ten I can remember well,
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange; but this sore night
Hath trifled former knowings.

ROSS

Ah, good father,
Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threaten his bloody stage; By th' clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the traveling lamp.*
Is 't night's predominance,* or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?

OLD MAN

'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last
A falcon towering in her pride of place
Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.

ROSS

And Duncan's horses (a thing most strange and certain)
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.

traveling lamp: refers to the sun.
predominance: ascendancy, supremacy.

OLD MAN

'Tis said they eat each other.

ROSS

They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes,
That looked upon 't.

Enter MACDUFF

Here comes the good Macduff.
How goes the world, sir, now?

MACDUFF

Why, see you not?

ROSS

Is 't known who did this more than bloody deed?

MACDUFF

Those that Macbeth hath slain.

ROSS

Alas, the day!
What good could they pretend?*

MACDUFF

They were suborned.*
Malcolm and Donalbain, the King's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

ROSS

'Gainst nature still!
Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up*
Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

pretend: intend, allege, expect.
suborn: bribe or hire to do an evil deed.
ravin up: swallow greedily, devour, bolt.

MACDUFF

He is already named, and gone to Scone
To be invested.

[illegible]

Where is Duncan's body?

MACDUFF

Carried to Colmekill,*
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.

ROSS

Will you to Scone?

MACDUFF

No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

[illegible]

Well, I will thither.

MACDUFF

Well, may you see things well done there. Adieu!
Lest our old robes sit easier than out new!

[illegible]

Farewell, father.

OLD MAN

God's benison* go with you, and with those
That would make good of bad and friends of foes!

[*Exeunt*]

Colmekill: Iona, the ancient burying grounds of the Kings of Scotland.
benison: blessing.

ACT III

SCENE I. *Forres. The palace*

Enter BANQUO

BANQUO

Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and I fear
Thou play'dst most foully for 't. Yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them
(As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine)
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well
And set me up in hope? But hush, no more.

Sennet sounded. Enter* MACBETH, *as King;* LADY MACBETH, *as Queen*; LENNOX, ROSS, LORDS, LADIES, *and* ATTENDANTS

MACBETH

Here's our chief guest.

LADY MACBETH

If he had been forgotten,

sennet: special notes or call on the trumpet to announce the approach and departure of processions or important personages.

It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all-thing* unbecoming.

MACBETH

Tonight we hold a solemn* supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.

BANQUO

Let your Highness
Command upon me, to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit.

MACBETH

Ride you this afternoon?

BANQUO

Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH

We should have else desired your good advice
(Which still hath been both grave and prosperous*)
In this day's council; but we'll take tomorrow.
Is 't far you ride?

BANQUO

As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twixt this and supper. Go not my horse the better,
I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain.

MACBETH

Fail not our feast.

BANQUO

My lord, I will not.

all-thing: altogether, entirely.
solemn: official, state, ceremonious.
prosperous: profitable.

MACBETH

We hear our bloody cousins are bestowed
In England and in Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention. But of that tomorrow,
When therewithal we shall have cause of state
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse. Adieu,
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

BANQUO

Ay, my good lord. Our time does call upon 's.

MACBETH

I wish your horses swift and sure of foot,
And so I do commend you to their backs.
Farewell. [*Exit* BANQUO]
Let every man be master of his time
Till seven at night. To make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper-time alone. While* then, God be with you!
[*Exeunt all but* MACBETH *and an* ATTENDANT]
Sirrah,* a word with you. Attend* those men
Our pleasure?

ATTENDANT

They are, my lord, without the palace gate.

MACBETH

Brings them before us. [*Exit* ATTENDANT]
To be thus is nothing,
But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo

while: until.
sirrah: word of haughty address used to inferiors.
attend: wait (on) or await.

Stick deep,* and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which be feared. 'Tis much he dares,
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear; and under him
My Genius is rebuked, as it is said
Mark Anthony's was by Cæsar. He chid the sisters,
When first they put the name of King upon me,
And bade them speak to him. Then prophet-like
They hailed him father to a line of kings.
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown
And put a barren scepter in my gripe,*
Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal* hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed* my mind,
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered,
Put rancors* in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel*
Given to the common enemy of man,*
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo's kings!
Rather than so, come, Fate, into the list,*

stick deep: go deep, be deeply imbedded.
gripe: grasp, grip.
unlineal: not by descent.
filed: defiled, corrupted.
rancor: bitterness, malicious enmity.
jewel: refers to soul.
common enemy of man: refers to Satan, the Devil.
list: field or place of combat.

And champion* me to th' utterance!* Who's there?

Re-enter ATTENDANT, *with* TWO MURDERERS

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.

[*Exit* ATTENDANT]

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

FIRST MURDERER

It was, so please your Highness.

MACBETH

Well then, now
Have you considered of my speeches? Know
That it was he in the times past which held you
So under fortune, which you thought had been
Our innocent self. This I made good to you
In our last conference; passed in probation* with you,
How you were borne in hand,* how crossed, the instruments,
Who wrought with them, and all things else that might
To half a soul and to a notion* crazed
Say 'Thus did Banquo.'

FIRST MURDERER

You made it known to us.

MACBETH

I did so; and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting. Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature

champion: oppose in single combat.
utterance: a term in chivalry, *"a l'outrance,"* "to the death."
passed in probation: proved, reviewed the evidence.
borne in hand: deceived, manipulated.
notion: mind, intellect.

That you can let this go? Are you so gospeled*
To pray for this good man and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bowed you to the grave
And beggared yours for ever?

FIRST MURDERER

We are men, my liege.

MACBETH

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,
As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs,* water-rugs* and demi-wolves, are clept*
All by the name of dogs. The valued file*
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The housekeeper,* the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed, whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike; and so of men.
Now if you have a station in the file,
Not i' th' worst rank of manhood, say 't,
And I will put that business in your bosoms
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

gospeled: influenced by gospel precepts.
shough: dog with shaggy hair.
water-rug: dog with rough coat adaptable to water.
clept: called, named.
file: list, catalog; classification.
housekeeper: watchdog.

SECOND MURDERER

I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Have so incensed that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.

FIRST MURDERER

And I another
So weary with disasters, tugged with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it or be rid on 't.

MACBETH

Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.

BOTH MURDERERS

True, my lord.

MACBETH

So is he mine, and in such bloody distance*
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life;* and though I could
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight
And bid my will avouch* it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I many not drop, but wail his fall
Who I myself struck down. And thence it is
That I to your assistance do make love,
Masking the business from the common eye
For sundry weighty reasons.

distance: disagreement, enmity, discord.
near'st of life: vital self, inmost being.
avouch: justify, answer for, guarantee.

SECOND MURDERER

We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.

FIRST MURDERER

Though our lives—

MACBETH

Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most
I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' th' time,
The moment on 't; for 't must be done tonight,
And something from the palace; always thought
That I require a clearness; and with him,
To leave no rubs* nor botches in the work,
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
Whose absence is no less material to me
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart;
I'll come to you anon.

BOTH MURDERERS

We are resolved, my lord.

MACBETH

I'll call upon you straight. Abide within.

[*Exeunt* MURDERERS]

It is concluded. Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out tonight. [*Exit*]

rubs: impediments, obstacles; term from bowling, referring to lumps that slowed down the ball.

SCENE II. *The palace*

Enter LADY MACBETH *and a* SERVANT

LADY MACBETH

Is Banquo gone from court?

SERVANT

Ay, madam, but returns again tonight.

LADY MACBETH

Say to the King, I would attend his leisure
For a few words.

SERVANT

Madam, I will. [*Exit*]

LADY MACBETH

Nought's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content.
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than be destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

Enter MACBETH

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making,
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without all remedy
Should be without regard. What's done is done.

MACBETH

We have scorched* the snake, not killed it:
She'll close* and be herself, whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.

scorched: slashed, cut.
close: heal, join.

But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly. Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy.* Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst. Nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.

LADY MACBETH

Come on.
Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial among your guests tonight.

MACBETH

So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you.
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave* our honors in these flattering streams,
And make our faces vizards* to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

LADY MACBETH

You must leave this.

MACBETH

O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!

ecstasy: frenzy, madness.
lave: bathe, dip.
vizards: masks.

Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

LADY MACBETH

But in them nature's copy's not eterne.

MACBETH

There's comfort yet, they are assailable.
Then be thou jocund. Ere the bat hath flown
His cloistered flight, ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne* beetle with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

LADY MACBETH

What's to be done?

MACBETH

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling* night,
Scarf up* the tender eye of pitiful day,
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to th' rooky* wood.
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
Thou marvel'st at my words; but hold thee still;

shard-borne: borne aloft or supported on scaly wing-cases or horny wings.
seeling: blinding; from falconry (the term for sewing together the bird's eyelids).
scarf up: blindfold.
rooky: darkened; a place of rooks or crows.

Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.
So, prithee, go with me. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE III. *A park near the palace*

Enter THREE MURDERERS

FIRST MURDERER
But who did bid thee join with us?
THIRD MURDERER
Macbeth.
SECOND MURDERER
He needs not our mistrust, since he delivers
Our offices,* and what we have to do,
To the direction just.
FIRST MURDERER
Then stand with us.
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day.
Now spurs the lated* traveler apace
To gain the timely inn, and near approaches
The subject of our watch.
THIRD MURDERER
Hark! I hear horses.
BANQUO
[*Within*] Give us a light there, ho!
SECOND MURDERER
Then 'tis he; the rest
That are within the note of expectation*

offices: duties.
lated: belated.
note of expectation: list of those invited or expected.

Already are i' th' court.

FIRST MURDERER

His horses go about.

THIRD MURDERER

Almost a mile; but he does usually,
So all men do, from hence to th' palace gate
Make it their walk.

SECOND MURDERER

A light, a light!

Enter BANQUO, *and* FLEANCE *with a torch*

THIRD MURDERER

'Tis he.

FIRST MURDERER

Stand to 't.

BANQUO

It will be rain tonight.

FIRST MURDERER

Let it come down.

[*They set upon* BANQUO]

BANQUO

O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!
Thou mayst revenge. O slave! [*Dies.* FLEANCE *escapes*]

THIRD MURDERER

Who did strike out the light?

FIRST MURDERER

Was 't not the way?

THIRD MURDERER

There's but one down; the son is fled.

SECOND MURDERER

We have lost
Best half of our affair.

FIRST MURDERER
Well, let's away and say how much is done. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE IV. *Hall in the palace*

A banquet prepared. Enter MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, LORDS, *and* ATTENDANTS

MACBETH
You know your own degrees;* sit down. At first
And last the hearty welcome.

LORDS
Thanks to your Majesty.

MACBETH
Ourself will mingle with society
And play the humble host.
Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time
We will require her welcome.

LADY MACBETH
Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends,
For my heart speaks they are welcome.

Enter FIRST MURDERER *to the door*

MACBETH
See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.
Both sides are even. Here I'll sit i' the midst:
Be large in mirth; anon we'll drink a measure
The table round. [*Approaching the door*] There's blood
upon thy face.

MURDERER
'Tis Banquo's then.

degrees: ranks.

MACBETH

'Tis better thee without than he within.
Is he dispatched?

MURDERER

My lord, his throat is cut, that I did for him.

MACBETH

Thou art the best o' th' cut-throats. Yet he's good
That did the like for Fleance. If thou didst it,
Thou art the nonpareil.

MURDERER

Most royal sir,
Fleance is 'scaped.

MACBETH

[*Aside*] Then comes my fit again. I had else been
perfect;
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad and general as the casing* air.
But now I am cabined, cribbed,* confined, bound in
To saucy* doubts and fears.—But Banquo's safe?

MURDERER

Ay, my good lord. Safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenched gashes on his head;
The least a death to nature.

MACBETH

Thanks for that.
[*Aside*] There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's
fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,

casing: enclosing, surrounding, enveloping.
cribbed: boxed in, stymied, hampered.
saucy: pushing, impudent, insolent.

No teeth for th' present. Get thee gone. Tomorrow
We'll hear ourselves again. [*Exit* MURDERER]

LADY MACBETH

My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer. The feast is sold
That is not often vouched, while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome. To feed were best at home;
From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.

The GHOST OF BANQUO *enters, and sits in* MACBETH'S *place*

MACBETH

Sweet remembrancer!
Now good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!

LENNOX

May 't please your Highness sit.

MACBETH

Here had we now our country's honor roofed,
Were the graced person of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance!

ROSS

His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please 't your Highness
To grace us with your royal company.

MACBETH

The table's full.

LENNOX

Here is a place reserved, sir.

MACBETH

Where?

LENNOX

Here, my good lord. What is 't that moves your Highness?

MACBETH

Which of you have done this?

LORDS

What, my good lord?

MACBETH

Thou canst not say I did it. Never shake
Thy gory locks at me.

[illegible]

Gentlemen, rise. His Highness is not well.

LADY MACBETH

Sit, worthy friends. My lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth. Pray you, keep seat;
The fit is momentary; upon a thought
He will again be well. If much you note him,
You shall offend him and extend his passion.*
Feed, and regard him not. [*Aside*] Are you a man?

MACBETH

Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appal the devil.

LADY MACBETH

O proper stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear.
This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws* and starts

passion: agitation, seizure.
flaws: outbursts; literally, gusts of wind.

(Impostors to true fear) would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authorized* by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.

MACBETH

Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo! how say you?
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel houses and our graves must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites.* [*Exit* GHOST]

LADY MACBETH

What, quite unmanned in folly?

MACBETH

If I stand here, I saw him.

LADY MACBETH

Fie, for shame!

MACBETH

Blood hath been shed ere now, i' th' olden time,
Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal;
Ay, and since too, murders have been performed
Too terrible for the ear. The time has been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end. But now they rise again,
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools. This is more strange
Than such a murder is.

LADY MACBETH

My worthy lord,

authorized: authored.
maws of kites: stomachs of birds of prey.

Your noble friends do lack you.

MACBETH

I do forget.
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;
Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine, fill full.

Re-enter GHOST

I drink to th' general joy o' th' whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
Would he were here! to all and him we thirst,
And all to all.

LORDS

Our duties, and the pledge.

MACBETH

Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation* in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with.

LADY MACBETH

Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom. 'Tis no other.
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

MACBETH

What man dare, I dare.
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The armed rhinoceros, or th' Hyrcan* tiger,

speculation: power of sight, intelligent observation.
Hyrcan: refers to desert area near Caspian Sea known as Hyrcania, where, according to Pliny, wild tigers roamed.

Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble. Or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mock'ry, hence! [*Exit* GHOST]
Why, so. Being gone,
I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.

LADY MACBETH

You have displaced* the mirth, broke the good meeting,
With most admired* disorder.

MACBETH

Can such things be,
And overcome* us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanched with fear.

ROSS

What sights, my lord?

LADY MACBETH

I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;
Question enrages him. At once, good night.
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

displaced: banished, upset.
admired: astonishing, amazing; to be wondered at.
overcome: come or pass over; overshadow.

LENNOX

Good night, and better health
Attend his Majesty!

LADY MACBETH

A kind good night to all!

[*Exeunt all but* MACBETH *and* LADY MACBETH]

MACBETH

It will have blood; they say blood will have blood.
Stones have been known to move and trees to speak;
Augures* and understood relations have
By maggot-pies* and choughs* and rooks* brought forth
The secret'st man of blood. What is the night?

LADY MACBETH

Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

MACBETH

How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?

LADY MACBETH

Did you send to him, sir?

MACBETH

I hear it by the way, but I will send.
There's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd.* I will tomorrow

augures: omens, auguries, divination.
maggot-pie: magpie; short form of Margaret, a common name for the caged bird, believed to have mystic qualities.
choughs: jackdaws and other members of the crow family.
rook: European bird similar to a crow.
fee'd: paid, as a spy.

(And betimes* I will) to the Weird Sisters:
More shall they speak; for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good
All causes shall give way. I am in blood
Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
Which must be acted ere they may be scanned.

LADY MACBETH

You lack the season of all natures, sleep.

MACBETH

Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse*
Is the initiate* fear that wants hard use.
We are yet but young in deed. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE V. *A heath*

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES, *meeting* HECATE

FIRST WITCH

Why, how now, Hecate, you look angerly.

HECATE

Have I not reason, beldams* as you are,
Saucy and over-bold? How did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth
In riddles and affairs of death;
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close* contriver of all harms,

betimes: quickly, soon, speedily, in good time.
self-abuse: hallucination, delusion, self-deception.
initiate: beginning, unpracticed.
beldam: hag, old crone; term of contempt for an old woman.
close: secret, hidden.

Was never called to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art?
And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a wayward son,
Spiteful and wrathful, who as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.
But make amends now. Get you gone,
And at the pit of Acheron*
Meet me i' th' morning. Thither he
Will come to know his destiny.
Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms and every thing beside.
I am for th' air; this night I'll spend
Unto a dismal and a fatal end.
Great business must be wrought ere noon.
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vap'rous drop profound;
I'll catch it ere it come to ground;
And that distilled by magic sleights*
Shall raise such artificial sprites
As by the strength of their illusion
Shall draw him on to his confusion.
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear;
And you all know security*
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

Acheron: hell or one of the rivers of Hades, the underworld in classical mythology.
sleights: devices.
security: over-confidence, false feeling of safety.

[*Music and a song within:*
'Come away, come away,' etc.]
Hark! I am called. My little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. [*Exit*]

FIRST WITCH
Come, let's make haste; she'll soon be back again.
[*Exeunt*]

SCENE VI. *Forres. The palace*

Enter LENNOX *and another* LORD

LENNOX
My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
Which can interpret farther. Only I say
Things have been strangely borne. The gracious
Duncan
Was pitied of Macbeth. Marry,* he was dead.
And the right-valiant Banquo walked too late;
Whom, you may say (if 't please you) Fleance killed,
For Fleance fled. Men must not walk too late.
Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous
It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
To kill their gracious father? damned fact!
How it did grieve Macbeth! did he not straight,
In pious rage, the two delinquents tear,
That were the slaves of drink and thralls* of sleep?
Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too;
For 'twould have angered any heart alive

marry: literally an oath: Mary, by the Virgin Mary.
thralls: slaves.

To hear the men deny 't. So that, I say,
He has borne all things well; and I do think
That, had he Duncan's sons under his key
(As, an 't please heaven, he shall not) they should find
What 'twere to kill a father. So should Fleance.
But, peace! for from broad words, and 'cause he failed
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear,
Macduff lives in disgrace. Sir, can you tell
Were he bestows himself?

LORD

The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
Lives in the English court, and is received
Of the most pious Edward* with such grace
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy King, upon his aid
To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward;
That by the help of these (with Him above
To ratify the work) we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,
Do faithful homage and receive free honors—
All which we pine for now. And this report
Hath so exasperate the King that he
Prepares for some attempt of war.

LENNOX

Sent he to Macduff?

Edward: refers to the saintly King Edward the Confessor (died 1066).

LORD

He did; and with an absolute 'Sir, not I,'
The cloudy* messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who should say 'You'll rue the time
That clogs me with this answer.'

LENNOX

And that well might
Advise him to a caution, t' hold what distance
His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
Fly to the court of England and unfold
His message ere he come, that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our suffering country
Under a hand accursed!

LORD

I'll send my prayers with him.

[Exeunt]

cloudy: sullen, angry, surly.

ACT IV

SCENE I. *A cavern. In the middle, a boiling caldron*

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES

FIRST WITCH

Thrice the brinded* cat hath mewed.

SECOND WITCH

Thrice and once the hedge-pig whines.

THIRD WITCH

Harpier* cries—' 'Tis time, 'tis time.'

FIRST WITCH

Round about the caldron go;
In the poisoned entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Sweltered* venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' th' charmed pot.

ALL

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.

brinded: early form of brindled; striped.
Harpier: name of familiar spirit, demon.
sweltered: sweated, exuded.

SECOND WITCH

Fillet of a fenny* snake,
In the caldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blindworm's* sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's* wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

ALL

Double, double toil and trouble:
Fire burn and caldron bubble.

THIRD WITCH

Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf*
Of the ravined* salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digged i' th' dark,
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat and slips of yew,
Slivered in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-delivered by a drab,*

fenny: from the fens or marshes; swampy.
blindworm: small snakelike slowworm, believed to be venomous but actually harmless, common in the English countryside; legless lizard, formerly called an adder.
howlet: small owl or owlet.
gulf: gullet.
ravined: ravenous, insatiable.
drab: whore, harlot, strumpet, wench, prostitute.

Make the gruel thick and slab.*
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,*
For th' ingredience of our caldron.

ALL

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.

SECOND WITCH

Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter HECATE *to the other three* WITCHES

HECATE

O, well done! I commend your pains,
And every one shall share i' th' gains.
And now about the caldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.

[*Music and a song:* 'Black Spirits,' etc.]

[HECATE *leaves*]

SECOND WITCH

By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!

Enter MACBETH

MACBETH

How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is 't you do?

slab: viscous, sticky, like slimy mud, glutinous.
chaudron: entrails, guts.

ALL

A deed without a name.

MACBETH

I conjure you, by that which you profess
(Howe'er you come to know it) answer me.
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches; though the yesty* waves
Confound and swallow navigation up;
Though bladed corn be lodged* and trees blown down;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of Nature's germens* tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken; answer me
To what I ask you.

FIRST WITCH

Speak.

SECOND WITCH

Demand.

THIRD WITCH

We'll answer.

FIRST WITCH

Say, if th'hadst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters.

MACBETH

Call 'em, let me see 'em!

FIRST WITCH

Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten

yesty: foaming, frothy.
lodged: beaten flat.
germens: seeds, germs.

Her nine farrow;* grease that's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet* throw
Into the flame.

ALL

Come, high or low;
Thyself and office deftly show!

Thunder. FIRST APPARITION, *an armed Head*

MACBETH

Tell me thou unknown power—

FIRST WITCH

He knows thy thought.
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

FIRST APPARITION

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff,
Beware the Thane of Fife. Dismiss me. Enough.

[*Descends*]

MACBETH

Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution thanks;
Thou hast harped* my fear aright. But one word more—

FIRST WITCH

He will not be commanded. Here's another,
More potent than the first.

Thunder. SECOND APPARITION, *a bloody Child*

SECOND APPARITION

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

farrow: litter, young.
gibbet: gallows; criminals were left hanging as a warning.
harp: guess, hit upon.

MACBETH

Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

SECOND APPARITION

Be bloody, bold and resolute; laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth. [*Descends*]

MACBETH

Then live, Macduff. What need I fear of thee?
But yet I'll make asurance double sure,
And take a bond of fate. Thou shalt not live,
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.

Thunder. THIRD APPARITION, *a Child crowned, with a tree in his hand*

What is this,
That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby-brow the round
And top of sovereignty?

ALL

Listen, but speak not to 't.

THIRD APPARITION

Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are.
Macbeth shall never vanquished be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him. [*Descends*]

MACBETH

That will never be;
Who can impress* the forest, bid the tree

impress: conscript.

Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements,* good!
Rebellious dead, rise never, till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature,* pay his breath
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing. Tell me, if your art
Can tell so much—shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?

ALL

Seek to know no more.

MACBETH

I will be satisfied. Deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know.
Why sinks that caldron? and what noise is this?

[*Hautboys*]

FIRST WITCH

Show!

SECOND WITCH

Show!

THIRD WITCH

Show!

ALL

Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart!

A show of eight KINGS, *the last with a glass* in his hand;* BANQUO'S GHOST *following*

bodements: prophecies, auguries, presages, omens.
lease of nature: normal lifespan.
glass: mirror.

MACBETH

Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo. Down!
Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls. And thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.
A third is like the former. Filthy hags!
Why do you show me this? A fourth? Start,* eyes!
What, will the line stretch out to th' crack of doom?
Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more.
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
Which shows me many more; and some I see
That twofold balls and treble scepters* carry.
Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true;
For the blood-boltered* Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his. What, is this so?

FIRST WITCH

Ay, sir, all this is so. But why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,
And show the best of our delights.
I'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antic round,*
That this great king may kindly say
Our duties did his welcome pay.

start: stare, bulge.
twofold balls and treble scepters: the coronation insignia of the Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland united in 1603 under Banquo's descendent, King James VI of Scotland (James I of England).
blood-boltered: matted or clotted with blood.
antic round: fantastic dance (usually in a circle).

[*Music. The* WITCHES *dance, and then vanish, with* HECATE]

MACBETH

Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious hour
Stand aye accursed in the calendar!
Come in, without there!

Enter LENNOX

LENNOX

What's your Grace's will?

MACBETH

Saw you the Weird Sisters?

LENNOX

No, my lord.

MACBETH

Came they not by you?

LENNOX

No indeed, my lord.

MACBETH

Infected be the air whereon they ride,
And damned all those that trust them! I did hear
The galloping of horse. Who was 't came by?

LENNOX

'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
Macduff is fled to England.

MACBETH

Fled to England!

LENNOX

Ay, my good lord,

MACBETH

[*Aside*] Time, thou anticipatest* my dread exploit.

anticipate: forestall.

The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it. From this moment
The very firstlings* of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done.
The castle of Macduff I will surprise,
Seize upon Fife, give to th' edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace* him in his line. No boasting like a fool;
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool.
But no more sights! [*Aloud*] Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE II. *Fife.* MACDUFF'S *castle*

Enter LADY MACDUFF, *her* SON, *and* ROSS

LADY MACDUFF
What had he done, to make him fly the land?

ROSS
You must have patience, madam.

LADY MACDUFF
He had none.
His flight was madness. When our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors.

ROSS
You know not
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

firstling: first fruit or first born of a litter.
trace: follow.

LADY MACDUFF

Wisdom! to leave his wife, to leave his babes,
His mansion and his titles, in a place
From whence himself does fly? He loves us not,
He wants the natural touch. For the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
All is the fear and nothing is the love,
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.

ROSS

My dearest coz,*
I pray you, school yourself. But, for your husband,
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' th' season. I dare not speak much further,
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumor
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way and none. I take my leave of you.
Shall not be long but I'll be here again.
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
To what they were before. My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you!

LADY MACDUFF

Fathered he is, and yet he's fatherless.

ROSS

I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort.
I take my leave at once. [*Exit*]

coz: cousin; refers to any close relative or kinsmen.

LADY MACDUFF

Sirrah, your father's dead,
And what will you do now? How will you live?

SON

As birds do, mother.

LADY MACDUFF

What, with worms and flies?

SON

With what I get, I mean, and so do they.

LADY MACDUFF

Poor bird! thou'ldst never fear the net nor lime,*
The pitfall nor the gin.*

SON

Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not set for.
My father is not dead, for all your saying.

LADY MACDUFF

Yes, he is dead. How wilt thou do for a father?

SON

Nay, how will you do for a husband?

LADY MACDUFF

Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

SON

Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

LADY MACDUFF

Thou speak'st with all thy wit, and yet, i' faith,
With wit enough for thee.

SON

Was my father a traitor, mother?

lime: birdlime, a sticky substance.
gin: trap, snare.

LADY MACDUFF

Ay, that he was.

SON

What is a traitor?

LADY MACDUFF

Why, one that swears and lies.

SON

And be all traitors that do so?

LADY MACDUFF

Every one that does so is a traitor, and must be hanged.

SON

And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

LADY MACDUFF

Every one.

SON

Who must hang them?

LADY MACDUFF

Why, the honest men.

SON

Then the liars and swearers are fools; for there are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men and hang up them.

LADY MACDUFF

Now, God help thee, poor monkey! But how wilt thou do for a father?

SON

If he were dead, you'd weep for him. If you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

LADY MACDUFF

Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER

Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honor I am perfect.
I doubt* some danger does approach you nearly.
If you will take a homely* man's advice,
Be not found here. Hence, with your little ones.
To fright you thus, methinks I am too savage;
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!
I dare abide no longer. [*Exit*]

LADY MACDUFF

Whither should I fly?
I have done no harm. But I remember now
I am in this earthly world, where to do harm
Is often laudable, to do good sometime
Accounted dangerous folly. Why then, alas,
Do I put up that womanly defense,
To say I have done no harm?

Enter MURDERERS

What are these faces?

FIRST MURDERER

Where is your husband?

LADY MACDUFF

I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou mayst find him.

doubt: fear, suspect.
homely: humble, simple, plain.

FIRST MURDERER

He's a traitor.

SON

Thou liest, thou shag-haired villain!

FIRST MURDERER

What, you egg!
[*Stabs him*]

Young fry* of treachery!

SON

He has killed me, mother.
Run away, I pray you! [*Dies*]

[*Exit* LADY MACDUFF, *crying 'Murder!' pursued by* MURDERERS]

SCENE III. *England. Before the* KING'S *palace*

Enter MALCOLM *and* MACDUFF

MALCOLM

Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.

MACDUFF

Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal* sword, and like good men
Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom. Each new morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland and yelled out
Like syllable of dolor.*

fry: spawn.
mortal: deadly, fatal.
like syllable of dolor: echoed cry of pain or lamentation.

MALCOLM

What I believe, I'll wail;
What know, believe; and what I can redress,
As I shall find the time to friend, I will.
What you have spoke, it may be perchance.
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,
Was once thought honest; you have loved him well;
He hath not touched you yet. I am young, but something
You may deserve of him through me; and wisdom
To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb
To appease an angry god.

MACDUFF

I am not treacherous.

MALCOLM

But Macbeth is.
A good and virtuous nature may recoil
In an imperial charge. But I shall crave your pardon.
That which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose.*
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell.
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
Yet grace must still look so.

MACDUFF

I have lost my hopes.

MALCOLM

Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.
Why in that rawness* left you wife and child,
Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,
Without leave-taking? I pray you,

transpose: alter, change.
rawness: unprotected state or condition.

Let not my jealousies be your dishonors,
But mine own safeties. You may be rightly just,
Whatever I shall think.

MACDUFF

Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee. Wear thou thy wrongs,
Thy title is affeered!* Fare thee well, lord.
I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp
And the rich East to boot.

MALCOLM

Be not offended.
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke,
It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds. I think withal
There would be hands uplifted in my right;
And here from gracious England have I offer
Of goodly thousands. But for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before,
More suffer and more sundry ways than ever,
By him that shall succeed.

MACDUFF

What should he be?

MALCOLM

It is myself I mean, in whom I know

affeered: confirmed (legally).

All the particulars of vice so grafted
That, when they shall be opened, black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
Esteem him as a lamb, being compared
With my confineless harms.

MACDUFF

Not in the legions
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damned
In evils to top Macbeth.

MALCOLM

I grant him bloody,
Luxurious,* avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name. But there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness. Your wive, your daughters,
Your matrons and your maids, could not fill up
The cistern of my lust, and my desire
All continent impediments would o'erbear,
That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth
Than such a one to reign.

MACDUFF

Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny. It hath been
Th' untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
To take upon you what is yours. You may
Convey* your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink.
We have willing dames enough. There cannot be

luxurious: lascivious, lecherous, lustful.
convey: contrive or obtain by secrecy or stealth.

That vulture in you, to devour so many
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
Finding it so inclined.

MALCOLM

With this there grows
In my most ill-composed affection such
A stanchless* avarice that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,
Desire his jewels and this other's house,
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more, that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.

MACDUFF

This avarice
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings. Yet do not fear.
Scotland hath foisons* to fill up your will
Of your mere own. All these are portable,*
With other graces weighed.

MALCOLM

But I have none. The king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temp'rance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish* of them, but abound

staunchless: insatiable.
foisons: abundance, plenty, ample.
portable: bearable, endurable.
relish: trace, hint.

In the division of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar* the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.

MACDUFF

O Scotland, Scotland!

MALCOLM

If such a one be fit to govern, speak.
I am as I have spoken.

MACDUFF

Fit to govern!
No, not to live. O nation miserable!
With an untitled tyrant bloody-sceptered,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction* stands accursed,
And does blaspheme his breed? Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king. The queen that bore thee,
Oft'ner upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Have banished me from Scotland. O my breast,
Thy hope ends here!

MALCOLM

Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honor. Devilish Macbeth

uproar: throw into upheaval; blast.
interdiction: exclusion, curse.

By many of these trains* hath sought to win me
Into his power; and modest* wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste; but God above
Deal between thee and me! for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction, here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For strangers to my nature. I am yet
Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
At no time broke my faith, would not betray
The devil to his fellow, and delight
No less in truth than life. My first false speaking
Was this upon myself. What I am truly,
Is thine and my poor country's to command.
Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,
Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
Already at a point,* was setting forth.
Now we'll together, and the chance of goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel! Why are you silent?

MACDUFF

Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a DOCTOR

MALCOLM

Well, more anon. Comes the King forth, I pray you?

trains: enticements, false lures.
modest: moderate, cautious.
at a point: armed, ready for action.

DOCTOR

Ay, sir. There are a crew of wretched souls
That stay* his cure. Their malady convinces*
The great assay of art;* but at his touch,
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.

MALCOLM

I thank you, doctor.

[*Exit* DOCTOR]

MACDUFF

What's the disease he means?

MALCOLM

'Tis called the evil.*
A most miraculous work in this good king,
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows; but strangely-visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere* despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp* about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers. And 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne

stay: await.
convinces: completely defeats or baffles.
assay of art: resources or knowledge of (medical) science.
evil: scrofula, a skin disease.
mere: utter, sheer, absolute.
stamp: coin, medal.

That speak him full of grace.

Enter ROSS

MACDUFF

See, who comes here?

MALCOLM

My countryman; but yet I know him not.

MACDUFF

My ever gentle cousin, welcome hither.

MALCOLM

I known him now. Good God, betimes remove
The means that makes us strangers!

ROSS

Sir, amen.

MACDUFF

Stands Scotland where it did?

ROSS

Alas, poor country!
Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be called our mother, but our grave; where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air,
Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy.* The dead man's knell
Is there scarce asked for who, and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or ere they sicken.

MACDUFF

O, relation

modern ecstasy: slight or commonplace excitement, disturbance, emotion.

Too nice,* and yet too true!

MALCOLM

What's the newest grief?

ROSS

That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;
Each minute teems* a new one.

MACDUFF

How does my wife?

ROSS

Why, well.

MACDUFF

And all my children?

ROSS

Well too.

MACDUFF

The tyrant has not battered at their peace?

ROSS

No, they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.

MACDUFF

Be not a niggard of your speech. How goes 't?

ROSS

When I came hither to transport the tidings,
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumor
Of many worthy fellows that were out;*
Which was to my belief witnessed the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot.
Now is the time of help. Your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,

nice: precise, exact.
teems: brings forth, gives birth to.
out: up in arms, in rebellion, in the field.

To doff their dire distresses.

MALCOLM

Be 't their comfort
We are coming thither. Gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men;
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.

RÓSS

Would I could answer
This comfort with the like! But I have words
That would be howled out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch* them.

MACDUFF

What concern they?
The general cause? or is it a fee-grief*
Due* to some single breast?

ROSS

No mind that's honest
But in it shares some woe, though the main part
Pertains to you alone.

MACDUFF

If it be mine,
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

[illegible]

Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
That ever yet they heard.

latch: catch.
fee-grief: private sorrow.
due: belonging.

MACDUFF

Humh! I guess at it.

ROSS

Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughtered. To relate the manner,
Were, on the quarry* of these murdered deer,
To add the death of you.

MALCOLM

Merciful heaven!
What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break.

MACDUFF

My children too?

ROSS

Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.

MACDUFF

And I must be from thence!
My wife killed too?

ROSS

I have said.

MALCOLM

Be comforted.
Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.

MACDUFF

He has no children. All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam

quarry: heap of slain deer at the end of the hunt

At one fell swoop?

MALCOLM

Dispute* it like a man.

MACDUFF

I shall do so;
But I must also feel it as a man.
I cannot but remember such things were
That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee! Naught* that I am,
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now!

MALCOLM

Be this the whetstone of your sword. Let grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

MACDUFF

O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
And braggart with my tongue! But gentle heavens,

dispute: resist; strive or struggle against; revenge.
naught: worthless, wicked.

Cut short all intermission.* Front to front*
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself.
Within my sword's length set him If he 'scape,
Heaven forgive him too!

MALCOLM

This tune goes manly.
Come, go we to the King. Our power is ready;
Our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may;
The night is long that never finds the day. [*Exeunt*]

intermission: interval, delay.
front to front: face to face.

ACT V

SCENE I. *Dunsinane. Ante-room in the castle*

Enter a DOCTOR OF PHYSIC *and a* WAITING GENTLEWOMAN

DOCTOR

I have two nights watched with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walked?

GENTLEWOMAN

Since his Majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her closet,* take forth paper, fold it, write upon 't, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

DOCTOR

A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep and do the effects of watching! In this slumbery agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say?

GENTLEWOMAN

That, sir, which I will not report after her.

closet: chest or desk containing personal papers.

DOCTOR

You may to me, and 'tis most meet* you should.

GENTLEWOMAN

Neither to you nor any one, having no witness to confirm my speech.

Enter LADY MACBETH, *with a taper*

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise,* and, my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.*

DOCTOR

How came she by that light?

GENTLEWOMAN

Why, it stood by her. She has light by her continually. 'Tis her command.

DOCTOR

You see, her eyes are open.

GENTLEWOMAN

Ay, but their sense are shut.

DOCTOR

What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

GENTLEWOMAN

It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands. I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

LADY MACBETH

Yet here's a spot.

meet: apt, suitable, fitting.
guise: custom, habit, fashion, practice.
close: concealed, hidden.

DOCTOR

Mark! she speaks. I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

LADY MACBETH

Out, damned spot! out, I say! One, two—why, then 'tis time to do 't. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to accompt? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

DOCTOR

Do you mark that?

LADY MACBETH

The Thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now? What, will these hands ne'er be clean? No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that! You mar all with this starting.

DOCTOR

Go to, go to! You have known what you should not!

GENTLEWOMAN

She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that. Heaven knows what she has known.

LADY MACBETH

Here's the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

DOCTOR

What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.*

GENTLEWOMAN

I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

charged: burdened, laden, heavy.

DOCTOR

Well, well, well.

GENTLEWOMAN

Pray God it be, sir.

DOCTOR

This disease is beyond my practice. Yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

LADY MACBETH

Wash your hands, put on your nightgown, look not so pale. I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried. He cannot come out on 's grave.

DOCTOR

Even so?

LADY MACBETH

To bed, to bed! There's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed. [*Exit*]

DOCTOR

Will she go now to bed?

GENTLEWOMAN

Directly.

DOCTOR

Foul whisp'rings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God forgive us all! Look after her,
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,*
And still keep eyes upon her. So good night.

annoyance: harm, self-injury.

My mind she has mated* and amazed my sight.
I think, but dare not speak.

GENTLEWOMAN

Good night, good doctor. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE II. *The country near Dunsinane*

Drum and colors. Enter MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, *and* SOLDIERS

MENTEITH

The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward and the good Macduff.
Revenges burn in them; for their dear* causes
Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
Excite the mortified man.

ANGUS

Near Birnam wood
Shall we well meet them; that way are they coming.

CAITHNESS

Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?

LENNOX

For certain, sir, he is not. I have a file
Of all the gentry. There is Siward's son,
And many unrough* youths, that even now
Protest* their first of manhood

MENTEITH

What does the tyrant?

mated: confounded, astonished.
dear: heartfelt, grievous.
unrough: unbearded, smooth-faced.
protest: proclaim, assert, show.

CAITHNESS

Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies.
Some say he's mad; others, that lesser hate him,
Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,
He cannot buckle his distempered* cause
Within the belt of rule.*

ANGUS

Now does he feel
His secret murders sticking on his hands;
Now minutely* revolts upbraid his faith-breach.
Those he commands move only in command,
Nothing in love. Now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.

MENTEITH

Who then shall blame
His pestered* senses to recoil and start,
When all that is within him does condemn
Itself for being there?

CAITHNESS

Well, march we on,
To give obedience where 'tis truly owed.
Meet we the med'cine of the sickly weal,*
And with him pour we, in our country's purge,
Each drop of us.

distempered: diseased, evil.
rule: reason, control.
minutely: every minute.
pestered: harassed, tormented, troubled.
weal: commonwealth, society.

LENNOX

Or so much as it needs
To dew* the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.
Make we our march towards Birnam.

[*Exeunt, marching*]

SCENE III. *Dunsinane. A court in the castle*

Enter MACBETH, DOCTOR, *and* ATTENDANTS

MACBETH

Bring me no more reports, let them fly all.
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane
I cannot taint* with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:
'Fear not, Macbeth. No man that's born of woman
Shall e'er have power upon thee.' Then fly, false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures.
The mind I sway by and the heart I bear
Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.

Enter a SERVANT

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!*
Where got'st thou that goose look?

SERVANT

There is ten thousand—

MACBETH

Geese, villain?

dew: water.
taint: become infected or tainted.
loon: worthless lout.

SERVANT

Soldiers, sir.

MACBETH

Go prick thy face and over-red* thy fear,
Thou lily-livered boy. What soldiers, patch?*
Death of thy soul! those linen cheeks of thine
Are counselors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?

SERVANT

The English force, so please you.

MACBETH

Take thy face hence. [*Exit* SERVANT]
Seyton!—I am sick at heart,
When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This push
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough. My way of life
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honor,* breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
Seyton!

Enter SEYTON

SEYTON

What's your gracious pleasure?

MACBETH

What news more?

over-red: paint or make red.
patch: fool.
mouth-honor: lip service.

SEYTON

All is confirmed, my lord, which was reported.

MACBETH

I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hacked.
Give me my armor.

SEYTON

'Tis not needed yet.

MACBETH

I'll put it on.
Send out more horses, skirr* the country round,
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armor.
How does your patient, doctor?

DOCTOR

Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.

MACBETH

Cure her of that.
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze* out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote*
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?

DOCTOR

Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.

skirr: scour.
raze: erase, blot out.
oblivious antidote: opiate; medicine to cause forgetfulness or oblivion.

MACBETH

Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it.
Come, put mine armor on. Give me my staff.
Seyton, send out. Doctor, the thanes fly from me.
Come, sir, dispatch. If thou couldst, doctor, cast
The water* of my land, find her disease
And purge it to a sound and pristine health,
I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again. Pull 't off, I say.
What rhubarb, senna,* or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of them?

DOCTOR

Ay, my good lord. Your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.

MACBETH

Bring it after me.
I will not be afraid of death and bane*
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

[*Exeunt all but the* DOCTOR]

DOCTOR

Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. [*Exit*]

cast the water: inspect, examine, or analyse the urine.
senna: purgative or cathartic herb.
bane: destruction, ruin.

SCENE IV. *Country near Birnam wood*

Drum and colors. Enter MALCOLM, SIWARD *and his* SON, MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS, *and* SOLDIERS, *marching*

MALCOLM
Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.

MENTEITH
We doubt it nothing.

SIWARD
What wood is this before us?

MENTEITH
The wood of Birnam.

MALCOLM
Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
And bear 't before him. Thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host and make discovery
Err in report of us.

SOLDIERS
It shall be done.

SIWARD
We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our setting down before 't.

MALCOLM
'Tis his main hope:
For where there is advantage to be given,
Both more and less have given him the revolt,
And none serve with him but constrained things
Whose hearts are absent too.

MACDUFF

Let our just censures
Attend the true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership.

SIWARD

The time approaches,
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have and what we owe.
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate,*
Towards which advance the war. [*Exeunt, marching*]

SCENE V. *Dunsinane. Within the castle*

Enter MACBETH, SEYTON, *and* SOLDIERS, *with drums and colors*

MACBETH

Hang out our banners on the outward walls;
The cry is still 'They come!' Our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn. Here let them lie.
Till famine and the ague eat them up.
Were they not forced* with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home.
[*A cry of women within*]
What is that noise?

SEYTON

It is the cry of women, my good lord. [*Exit*]

MACBETH

I have almost forgot the taste of fears.

arbitrate: decide.
forced: reinforced.

The time has been, my sense would have cooled
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell* of hair
Would at a dismal treatise* rouse and stir
As life were in 't. I have supped full with horrors.
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.

Re-enter SEYTON

SEYTON
The Queen, my lord, is dead.

MACBETH
She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Enter a MESSENGER

Thou comest to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.

MESSENGER
Gracious my lord,
I should report that which I say I saw,

fell: scalp, pelt.
treatise: story, discourse.

But know not how to do 't.

MACBETH

Well, say sir.

MESSENGER

As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I looked toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

MACBETH

Liar and slave!

MESSENGER

Let me endure your wrath, if 't be not so.
Within this three mile may you see it coming.
I say, a moving grove.

MACBETH

If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling* thee. If thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pull in* resolution, and begin
To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth. 'Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane!' and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!
If this which he avouches does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.
I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun,
And wish th' estate o' th' world were now undone.
Ring the alarum bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack,

cling: shrivel, wither.
pull in: check, curb, rein in.

At least we'll die with harness* on our back. [*Exeunt*]

SCENE VI. *Dunsinane. Before the castle*

Drum and colors. Enter MALCOLM, SIWARD, MACDUFF, *and their* ARMY, *with boughs*

MALCOLM

Now near enough. Your leavy screens throw down,
And show like those you are. You, worthy uncle,
Shall, with my cousin, your right noble son,
Lead our first battle.* Worthy Macduff and we
Shall take upon 's what else remains to do,
According to our order.

SIWARD

Fare you well.
Do we but find the tyrant's power tonight,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

MACDUFF

Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE VII. *Another part of the field*

Alarums. Enter MACBETH

MACBETH

They have tied me to a stake. I cannot fly,
But bear-like I must fight the course.* What's he

harness: armor.
battle: division, battalion of an army.
course: attack of dogs in bear-baiting.

That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter YOUNG SIWARD

YOUNG SIWARD
What is thy name?

MACBETH
Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

YOUNG SIWARD
No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
Than any is in hell.

MACBETH
My name's Macbeth

YOUNG SIWARD
The devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.

MACBETH
No, nor more fearful.

YOUNG SIWARD
Thou liest, abhorred tyrant! With my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

[*They fight, and* YOUNG SIWARD *is slain*]

MACBETH
Thou wast born of woman.
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandished by man that's of a woman born. [*Exit*]

Trumpets. Enter MACDUFF

MACDUFF
That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!
If thou beest slain and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.

I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms
Are hired to bear their staves.* Either thou, Macbeth
Or else my sword, with an unbattered edge,
I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst be;
By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems bruited.* Let me find him, Fortune!
And more I beg not. [*Exit. Alarums*]

Enter MALCOLM *and* SIWARD

SIWARD
This way, my lord. The castle's gently rendered.*
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight,
The noble thanes do bravely in the war,
The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.

MALCOM
We have met with foes
That strike beside us.

SIWARD
Enter, sir, the castle.
[*Exeunt. Alarum*]

SCENE VIII. *Another part of the field*

Enter MACBETH

MACBETH
Why should I play the Roman fool, and die

staves: spears.
bruited: revealed, proclaimed, reported, announced.
render: surrender.

On mine own sword? Whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

Enter MACDUFF

MACDUFF

Turn, hell-hound, turn!

MACBETH

Of all men else I have avoided thee.
But get thee back. My soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.

MACDUFF

I have no words.
My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out! [*They fight*]

MACBETH

Thou losest labor.
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant* air
With thy keen sword impress* as make me bleed.
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests.
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.

MACDUFF

Despair thy charm,
And let the angel whom thou still hast served
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripped.

MACBETH

Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cowed my better part of man!

intrenchant: invulnerable; not capable of being cut or gashed.
impress: leave a mark or impression on.

And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter* with us in a double sense,
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope. I'll not fight with thee.

MACDUFF

Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' th' time:
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole,* and underwrit,
'Here may you see the tyrant.'

MACBETH

I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last. Before my body
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff;
And damned be him that first cried 'Hold, enough!'

[*Exeunt, fighting. Alarums*]

Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with drum and colors, MALCOLM, SIWARD, ROSS, *the other* THANES, *and* SOLDIERS

MALCOM

I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

palter: shuffle, juggle, quibble, equivocate.
painted upon a pole: refers to poster, sign or board painted for display outside a booth or tent at a fair.

SIWARD

Some must go off,* and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

MALCOM

Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

ROSS

Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt.
He only lived but till he was a man,
The which no sooner had his prowess confirmed
In the unshrinking station* where he fought,
But like a man he died.

SIWARD

Then he is dead?

ROSS

Ay, and brought off the field. Your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

SIWARD

Had he his hurts before?

ROSS

Ay, on the front.

SIWARD

Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death.
And so his knell is knolled.

MALCOLM

He's worth more sorrow,

go off: die, perish.
unshrinking station: maintained position (i.e., place from which young Siward stood firm and did not retreat).

And that I'll spend for him.

SIWARD

He's worth no more.
They say he parted well and paid his score.*
And so God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.

Re-enter MACDUFF, *with* MACBETH'S *head*

MACDUFF

Hail, King! for so thou art. Behold, where stands
Th' usurper's cursed head. The time is free.
I see thee compassed* with thy kingdom's pearl,
That speak my salutation in their minds,
Whose voices I desire along with mine—
Hail, King of Scotland!

ALL

Hail, King of Scoland!

[*Flourish*]

MALCOLM

We shall not spend a large expense of time
Before we reckon with your several loves,
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be Earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honor named. What's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time,
As calling home our exiled friends abroad
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny,
Producing for the cruel ministers
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands

score: debt, reckoning.
compassed: surrounded.

Took off her life; this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace
We will perform in measure,* time and place.
So thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone.

[*Flourish. Exeunt*]

in measure: in proportion; in full measure; with decorum.

STUDY AIDS

The purpose of study aids is to supply questions and topics for discussion and compositions so that students may gain a better understanding of *Macbeth*. The first section includes questions on each act; the second, questions on the play as a whole; the final section, questions and topics for papers.

I

1. In the first scene of Act I the three Weird Sisters chant: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair;/ Hover through the fog and filthy air." How do these lines set the tone for the entire play? Are they echoed later in this act?

2. Early in the first act we obtain a highly complimentary picture of Macbeth. How, specifically, would you describe this man? Consider remarks made by the Sergeant, Duncan, Ross. What is his fatal flaw?

3. Macbeth listens in amazement to the witches' prophecies. Is there any possibility he had earlier harbored ambitious thoughts concerning the throne? Is there any indication in the play that he may have?

4. What is Lady Macbeth's attitude toward her husband? Is she ambitious for herself? Substantiate your answers with references to the text.

5. Describe in your own words Macbeth's thoughts concerning the killing of Duncan in his soliloquy at the beginning of Scene VII of Act I. What may deter him from committing the murder?

6. In the second act Macbeth thinks he sees a dagger leading him to Duncan's chamber. What does this soliloquy reveal as to his state of mind? Does this vision of a dagger foreshadow other examples of Macbeth's vivid imagination?

7. What are the reactions of Macbeth and his wife after the murder is committed? Has Lady Macbeth really shown iron will throughout the deed?

8. What is the function of the porter scene? Explain the allusion to the porter of hell-gate.

9. Are there those at the end of Act II who suspect that Macbeth murdered Duncan? Refer to specific lines.

10. As Macbeth becomes more embroiled in crime, he does not share his guilt with Lady Macbeth. Why is this so? Consider events in the third act.

11. Who is the third murderer? Was it Macbeth himself?

12. Fleance escapes with his life. Until then Macbeth has known only fortune's favor. What successes has he experienced until this point?

13. Does Macbeth actually see or does he only imagine he sees the ghost of Banquo? What evidence is there for either point of view?

14. Why does Macbeth return to consult the witches? What symbols do they use to convey their prophecies? How is he reassured? Why does he feel himself invulnerable?

15. Does Macbeth hate Banquo and Macduff? Or are his feelings more subtle? Describe those feelings in your own words.

16. The scene with Lady Macduff and her son does not in any major way advance the action. What is its purpose?

17. While sleepwalking, what facts does Lady Macbeth reveal? Are they revealed in the order in which they happened? Why is it appropriate they are not chronological?

18. How does Macbeth react to Lady Macbeth's death?

19. Why does Macbeth decide to fight in the open rather than remain in his castle?

20. What kind of man is Malcolm? Is he capable? Does he reveal qualities of leadership? Cite specific references.

21. When is Macbeth first aware that the prophecies have an equivocal meaning?

22. In what way does Macbeth still arouse our awe at the end of the play?

II

1. Certain images recur in *Macbeth*, such as food, clothing, blood, seeds, darkness, infancy. Find them and comment on how they contribute to the overall atmosphere and meaning of the play.
2. Does Macbeth consciously choose to murder Duncan, or is he "possessed"?
3. Why does Lady Macbeth have such power over her husband?
4. What external and internal forces are at work on Macbeth? on Lady Macbeth?
5. Does the relationship between Macbeth and his wife change as events unfold? How so?
6. What characters serve as foils to others? In what ways are they foils?
7. What qualities have Duncan, Edward II and Malcolm in contrast to those of Macbeth?
8. Does darkness hover over the entire play? Are there any scenes that occur in sunshine? Is there any humor?
9. Has Macbeth in a sense already died before Macduff kills him? Explain fully and refer to the play to support your opinion.
10. Do you sympathize at all with Macbeth and his wife? If so, why do you?

11. Is Lady Macbeth naturally depraved? Cite specific instances to substantiate the view you take.

12. What is Nature's reaction to human events? Recall the night of Duncan's murder.

13. What are some of the references to Nature in the play? to blood? to darkness? to animals?

14. How is *Macbeth* a play of contrasts? Consider good and evil, justice and injustice, etc. Why would Shakespeare introduce such contrasts?

15. Why is *Macbeth* universal in its appeal? Why is it still meaningful?

III

Papers can be based on the following statements by Shakespearean critics. Not all refer specifically to *Macbeth;* apply those that do not to the play you have just read. Whether you agree or disagree with the statement, be sure to support your view with references to the text.

1. "Shakespeare's man [i.e., his tragic hero], like the universe, is no accident, but something worthy of a Creator. Sometimes he is the beauty of the world, sometimes harsh, jangled, out of tune, sometimes the tool of falsehood and malice, but never, even at his worst, the generation of slime." —Alfred Harbage, in *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions.*

2. In all of Shakespeare's great tragedies, "the insistence . . . is on the free will of the hero, or villain. The watchword is causality. The dramatist does not admit of the interposition of chance, or caprice."—Russell A. Fraser, in *Shakespeare's Poetics.*

3. "Macbeth wants the action without the consequences, without the uncontrollable, multiplying effects; he dreams of an action which contains and controls all its results within itself." —Terence Eagleton, in *Shakespeare and Society.*

4. Lady Macbeth's "want of imagination, though it helps to make [her] strong for immediate action, is fatal to her."—A.C. Bradley, in *Shakespearean Tragedy.*

5. "Strange and almost ludicrous as the statement may sound, [Lady Macbeth] is, up to her light, a perfect wife."—A.C. Bradley, in *Shakespearean Tragedy.*

Write papers on the following topics:

6. Macbeth as both hero and villain.

7. Dream imagery in *Macbeth.*

8. "The night is long that never finds the day." (Apply this quotation to the play as a whole.)

9. "There's daggers in men's smiles." (Show how this thought runs throughout *Macbeth.)*

10. A meaning in *Macbeth* for today's world.

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